

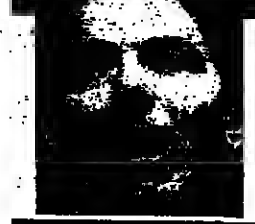


THE INDEPENDENT

2967

MONDAY 22 APRIL 1996 40p

INSIDE TODAY'S SECTION TWO



Can you trust new Labour?

Andrew Marr starts a week-long series

Should you give up work for your children?

Family Life

Bill Clinton and his women

Cover story



Girls sweep past boys in exams race

JUDITH JUDD
Education Editor

Girls are doing as well or better than boys in every GCSE subject and are catching up fast at A-level, according to the first major study to examine exam trends for the two sexes over the past decade.

The 193-page report from the Equal Opportunities Commission found that boys failed to improve their GCSE performance as much as girls over the period and their performance lagged well behind in English, humanities, arts, modern languages and technology.

Even in the traditional male strongholds of maths and physics, girls' performance is now matching boys at both GCSE and A-level.

The report from Cambridge and South Bank universities offers the most comprehensive evidence so far of the extent to which boys are falling behind girls. Recently, Chris Woodhead, the Chief Inspector of Schools, highlighted the underachievement of white working-class boys.

The researchers argue that cultural changes have led to higher expectations of girls while the disappearance of many traditional working-class jobs has demotivated some boys. At A-level, boys still do better in English, modern languages, history, technology and chemistry but



the gap is narrowing. Girls do better in biology, social studies and art and design. Boys also get more vocational qualifications than girls.

Madeleine Arnot, one of the authors, said it was misleading to talk about boys' underachievement. "We have a success story here. This is an excellent sign of the work schools have done to improve girls' performance so that they are now catching up."

The researchers looked at girls' and boys' performance in relation to their proportion of entry to exams. The comparisons are based on figures for those getting five or more A-C grades at GCSE and of A and B grades at A-level.

The year-long study of exam results between 1985 and 1994 examined the effect of recent education reforms on equal opportunities. It found that the improvement in girls' performance predated the start of the national curriculum and the 1988 Education Reform Act.

However, the national curriculum has helped to ensure that, at 16, girls are now taking "male" subjects, such as science, which they shunned in the past. Boys predominate only in chemistry and economics; girls only in social studies.

However, the report emphasises that girls still have some way to go. At A-level they still avoid traditionally male-dominated subjects such as physics: boys now account for an even higher proportion of entries in physics and technology than they did 10 years ago.

Girls do slightly better than boys at physics, probably because they are such a small, selective group. The proportion of girls taking chemistry and maths also lags well behind that for boys.

Yet more boys are now taking "female" subjects such as English and modern languages at A-level.

Young men under 21 also achieve more vocational qualifications and young women opt mainly for traditional female courses such as hairdressing and beauty and care.

Dentists' stampede out of NHS to be halted

COLIN BROWN
Chief Political Correspondent

The Government is planning moves to halt the stampede of dentists out of the National Health Service.

Stephen Dorrell, the Secretary of State for Health, is preparing legislation which would bring far-reaching changes to the work of Britain's 17,000 dentists.

The Bill, which could be in the next Queen's Speech, would give local health authorities powers to "buy" health care from dentists for NHS patients for the first time.

The main aim is to allow health authorities to tackle evidence of worsening dental health, particularly for children in some areas, by setting local targets.

It would end the system of "demand-led" care under which dentists respond to patient demand and are then paid a fee for their services. The new system is likely to be coupled with tighter controls on the cost of treatment which can be provided on the NHS, ruling out more expensive courses of treatment or some types of dentures. There could also be clearly defined

catchment areas in which patients would have to live.

Mr Dorrell plans a series of pilot schemes in seven or eight towns.

However, the move could mean that some patients whose dentists withdrew from providing care on the NHS could have their care restored. Local authorities would purchase the care directly from the dentists. Ministers believe this will help them to defend their record on the health service more effectively at the general election.

The collapse of NHS dental care in many areas came after the Government cut fees for dentists by 7 per cent in 1990. The cut provoked an exodus as dentists moved to the private sector because they felt it was not worth working for the NHS.

In some areas, particularly the Home Counties, many practices ceased offering NHS care. In Berkshire, for example, dentists' earnings from the NHS have dropped by 30 per cent since 1990.

That has led to accusations of a two-tier dental service, in which some poorer families may have to go without regular check-ups.

Dentists who remained on

the NHS lists are concentrated in poorer areas. In Gateshead, South Tyneside, the fees paid to dentists on the NHS have gone up 130 per cent since 1990.

Areas such as the North-east, where dentists have stayed with the NHS, may see their budgets held down under the change from demand-led care to purchasing by health authorities.

One dentist's leader said: "They cannot pay for the whole of the health care. At some stage, some government is going to have the courage to say we cannot do everything."

"One of the things suggested by the Commons select committee on health was that there should be a basic level of service but you have to pay for his on top of that."

Ministers are still drawing up the Government's list of legislation for the Queen's Speech. They are looking for a package to show the Government has not run out of ideas in the approach to a general election.

A spokesman for the Association of British Dentists said: "We are waiting to hear what the Government says, but we have a problem over how you relate it to the demand-led process."



Storming home: Liz McColgan runs up the Mall to victory in the London Marathon yesterday. Photograph: David Ashdown

And they told her she would never run again...

MIKE ROWBOTTOM
Athletics Correspondent

Liz McColgan stormed home to win the Flora London Marathon yesterday, just over two years after being told by a medical specialist that she would never run again.

The 31-year-old from Dundee, who underwent two knee operations either side of Christmas 1993, received huge support in what was the hottest race in the London Marathon's 16-year history, with temperatures rising towards 80F.

About 3,000 runners were treated for the effects of heat. After becoming the first British woman to win in London since Veronique Marot seven years ago, McColgan paid tribute to her coach, Norway's former world marathon champion Grete Waitz.

McColgan's victory confirmed that she is back to the kind of form which brought her the world 10,000-metres title five years ago, and provided ideal preparation for her Olympic challenge this summer.

"My rivals are going to have to do something extra special if they are going to prevent me from coming back from Atlanta with gold," she said.

"Things happen to you for a reason. I believe the problems I have faced in the last three years have been a test and I am a better, stronger person for coming through it. I always knew in myself that I could make it back."

McColgan took the lead with six of the 26 miles remaining after catching Anita Haakenstad of Norway, whose lone run threatened the upset the formbook in a race involving some of the world's fastest runners.

The men's race was won by Dionicio Ceron of Mexico who completed an unprecedented hat-trick of London wins in the men's race. Paul Evans, in third place, was the first male Briton home.

Paedophiles 'control children's homes'

ROGER DOBSON and REBECCA FOWLER

The senior police officer leading Britain's biggest ever investigation into sexual abuse in children's homes has warned that paedophiles are still at large at senior levels in the social services.

Detective Inspector Terrence Oates expects to see 14 care workers go on trial in Cheshire where hundreds of children were allegedly abused during the Seventies and Eighties. But he fears many of the paedophiles who targeted homes for jobs have continued to work undetected.

His concerns coincide with the findings of the suppressed inquiry into widespread abuses in Clwyd, which addresses allegations that paedophiles worked in groups and set up systemised abuse in homes. It says: "It is clear that sex offenders can and do network."

DI Oates, who has been investigating allegations of abuse by paedophiles working in Cheshire homes for two years, said: "There is evidence some of them have risen fairly high up in social services, and so when allegations started to come in they were in the ideal position to stop it in its tracks."

The unpublished 300-page report into abuse in Clwyd involves seven homes where more than 100 children were abused. At least 12 died in adulthood in circumstances related to their traumatic experiences in care. The inquiry team of child



care experts, led by John Jillings, former director of social work in Derbyshire, say in the report: "The history of allegations of serious abuse of children by staff was frankly appalling in its extent and persistence down the years."

In a damning conclusion the report warns the Government about heading recommendations on changing practices in

proved inspection and registration of children's homes: the creation of a central index of people with convictions against children; and improved training.

Allan Levy, QC, the authority on child abuse who co-wrote the inquiry into pin-down abuses in Staffordshire in 1991, said: "It is still a question of a child in care may well be a child in danger... One of the pin-down inquiry recommendations was that a statutory list of offenders should be set up. Five years have gone by and nothing has happened."

Despite recommendations from a series of inquiries, it is still possible for an applicant with no experience to find work in a residential home with children. The lack of a central register of trained workers also makes it impossible for employers to check references.

Daphne Statham, director of the National Institute for Social Work, which is campaigning for a central regulatory body to oversee workers, has a collection of advertisements that read: "Wanted: Person to work in children's home. No experience required."

Ms Statham said: "Each time there's a scandal it comes up again, but then people forget about it. These children aren't listened to, while there are still people in these jobs being shifted around the system to avoid trouble. Staff are also moving between agencies, getting found out, nothing being done about it, and moving on to the next job."

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Delhi blast: Heir to Marquess of Bath injured and friends die as Kashmir and Sikh separatists claim 17 lives

Terrorists kill two Britons in hotel bombing

JAMES CUSICK

Viscount Weymouth, son and heir to the Marquess of Bath, was injured and his girlfriend and business partner both killed in a terrorist bomb attack on a New Delhi hotel which left 17 dead.

The bomb, which exploded on Saturday night, was planted by Sikh and Kashmiri separatists. The young Viscount, 21, heir to the £150m Longleat estate was in hospital yesterday with minor head injuries.

The Viscount's girlfriend, Scarlet Kirby, and Crinan Wilde, a business associate, both thought to be in their mid-20s, were killed in the explosion which ripped through the low-budget Arjuna guest house near the city's main railway station. The hotel was popular with international backpacking travellers in the region.

The trio had spent most of the winter months in India helping with the creation of a new ski resort in Manali in the Himalayas. Last night Lord Bath, regarded as one of Britain's most colourful aristocrats due to his hippy appearance and lifestyle and the controversy he created by painting sexually explicit frescoes at Longleat, said he was "devastated" by the deaths. He said he was hoping to get his son back home to England as soon as possible.

"I feel the right solution is to bring him home," he said. Lord Bath said he telephoned the Viscount, called Caewlin Thynn, yesterday morning. "Caewlin is understandably shocked. He was in the building that was blown up. He is all right at the moment, not seriously injured, but he has a tragedy on his hands."

When the Marquess initially spoke to his son, the authorities in India had not yet broken the news to him that his girlfriend and business friend had been killed. "They were all great friends and extremely fond of each other," said the Marquess.

The two dead Britons died as the building collapsed following the explosion which came from a 25kg device. Travellers from France, Nigeria and Holland also died in the explosion. The bomb is part of the campaign by the separatists to disrupt forthcoming elections in Kashmir.

Witness who saw the explosion said the four-storey hotel had simply collapsed. Communiqué sent to local newspapers in Kashmir said two previously unknown groups had claimed responsibility. One message said: "This is a first gift to India for conducting polls in Kashmir." The separatists' conflict with India is now in its sixth year and has involved the kidnapping of foreigners, including Britons and Americans. Police have so far arrested six Kashmiri militants in the New Delhi area in connection with the explosion.

Last night the Viscount's sister, Lenka, was trying to arrange a flight to be with her brother. "My brother is OK physically, but not emotionally," she said. Before he left for India, Viscount Weymouth had been studying economics and philosophy at University College, London. As a teenager he attended one of the country's top public schools, Bedales in Wiltshire. He was expelled from the school when he was 17 for smoking cannabis.

More concerned with his son's immediate health and plans to get him home, the Marquess said last night that he had no idea if his son would be returning to his academic studies or whether the ski and business venture would continue.



Survivor: Viscount Weymouth, who was hurt, with his parents, Lord and Lady Bath. Photograph: South West News Service



Blast scene: Rescuers clearing debris at the hotel to get to the dead and injured

Photograph: Saurabh Das/AP

Emma Thompson adds Bafta to Oscar trophies

MARIANNE MACDONALD
Arts Correspondent

Sense and Sensibility was voted best film of the year at the 1995 Bafta Awards ceremony at the Theatre Royal in London's West End, last night. But unlike the Oscars, Emma Thompson failed to take the prize for best adapted screenplay.

She could console herself, however, with the awards for best leading actress in the film, while John Hodge took the coveted best adaptation prize for the controversial Scottish film *Trainspotting*.

Sense and Sensibility, the adaptation of Jane Austen's early novel, won a third award which went to Kate Winslet for best supporting actress as the romantic Marianne.

The Alexander Korda award for the outstanding British film of the year went to *The Madness of King George*, while Nigel Hawthorne was voted best leading actor for his performance as the unhappy king.

Michael Radford took the David Lean award for the best achievement in direction for *Il Postino*.

The award, he said, went against "the accepted wisdom in the world of cinema that you have to make the film in the English language for it to be successful". It also won the award for the best non-English language film.

Braveheart followed up its Oscar successes with the Lloyds Bank People's Vote for favourite film, while *The Usual Suspects* took best original screenplay and Tim Roth was voted best supporting actor for his role in *Rob Roy*.

Persuasion, Mick Dear's adaptation of another Jane Austen novel, won the award for best single television drama, while *Cracker* took best drama series and *The Politician's Wife* was voted best drama serial.

Jennifer Ehle won best actress in the television awards for her role as Lizzie in *Pride and Prejudice* - the third Jane Austen hit of last year - and Robbie Coltrane best actor for third year running for his performance in *Cracker*.

Protestant clergy reveal dialogue with Sinn Fein

DAVID McKITTRICK
Ireland Correspondent

Leading Protestant clergymen have for the past six years been involved in confidential political and religious discussions with senior republicans, including the president of Sinn Fein, Gerry Adams.

Many of those involved in the exercise believe the talks, which began in 1990 and are still continuing, played a significant part in convincing republicans to steer towards the IRA ceasefire of August 1994.

During the period involved Sinn Fein policy has been adjusted to take considerably more account of the rights of Protestants and Unionists. Last month a number of speakers at Sinn Fein's annual conference alluded to such contacts and stressed their importance.

The long-running contact has been conducted in conditions of some secrecy, generally taking place in a monastery in the Falls Road district of west Belfast. Among the prime movers were Fr Alex Reid and Fr Gerry Reynolds, two Redemptorist priests based at the monastery, and the Rev Ken Newell, a south Belfast Presbyterian minister.

Today the contacts, which survived the breakdown of the IRA ceasefire in February, involve up to 10 Protestant clergy and lay people. They remain a sensitive issue as many Protestants disapprove of any links with republicans.

Some members of the group, including the two priests, have also for some years been in contact with leading figures in extreme loyalist paramilitary groups. The contacts are described by the Rev Newell in a book to be published this week, *The Fight for Peace*, and in a Channel 4 "Dispatches" programme to be broadcast on Wednesday.

In an unprecedented tribute to Mr Adams from a Protestant clergyman, Mr Newell said: "There is a side of him that is very reflective and warm, and he deeply believes people should be together and not apart."

The Sinn Fein president attended the talks on a regular basis for several years, before suggesting the circle should be widened to involve other members of Sinn Fein. They now involve figures from the Church of Ireland and the Presbyterian and Methodist churches.

Mr Newell said that in 1992, after 18 months of talks, the Protestants involved came to be convinced that Mr Adams and

the other republicans were serious about peace. He described the Sinn Fein president as originally "emotionally distant" but said he developed a growing respect for the Presbyterian and Protestant traditions.

As the talks went on, said Mr Newell, the Protestants concluded that the Sinn Fein members had a new agenda and were genuinely looking for peace.

Mr Adams said yesterday that Sinn Fein would shortly decide whether or not to take part in the Northern Ireland elections being held on 30 May.

He said in a radio interview: "We all have to be prepared to make the necessary flexible compromises to try and bring about a proper democratic negotiated settlement, which has the agreement of all the people of the island. That has to be the main focus."

Bart's may become charity-run hospital

NICHOLAS TIMMINS
Public Policy Editor

A new charity to save St Bartolomew's Hospital and run it partly as a charitable hospital is to be launched in the next few weeks.

The Barts Foundation will then work with the City of London and the special trustees of the existing hospital to draw up a business plan which will determine whether the 800-year-old hospital has a long term future.

A report financed by the health service think tank, the King's Fund, has already proposed a future for Barts, modelled on the pre-war voluntary hospitals with the institution undertaking private work and NHS contracts while providing charitable treatment for non-paying patients.

But the new study will determine what the level of demand for paid-for services actually is, Bernard Harty, the City Corporation's Town Clerk,

or chief executive, said yesterday. It is hoped to have the results available by the summer.

"The question is what services are the city and business community and others actually prepared to pay for?" he said. Obvious candidates would be the occupational health services, which companies already run but which Barts might be able to provide more competitively, a minor injuries unit, a wide range of out-patient services, and a nursing home in which the City of London - with an ageing population - would buy places on contract.

Mr Harty stressed that the City of London had made no offer for the site or promised any money yet to help acquire it. "We would not decide the size of the site we wanted until we knew what services it would be possible to finance and provide there."

The Barts Foundation - being launched by doctors at the hospital and City figures who include the Lord Mayor of Lon-

don - will aim to raise the millions needed first to buy the site and then help run it.

Dr Max Gammon, a trustee designate of the foundation, which he said should be established in about six weeks' time, said raising the capital would not be difficult, but ensuring the funds were there to run services on the site "will be an immensely difficult nut to crack".

Backers of the scheme hope the Treasury might part with Barts for as little as £2m to £3m as its high content of listed buildings mean that for many uses the site is likely to have a negative value, despite its prime location. A proposal for the London School of Economics to move there, founded over the £100m-plus adaptation cost.

Questions are likely to remain, however, over the willingness of the NHS to dispose of the site for health care if that was seen to prejudice the redevelopment of the Royal London Hospital when Barts finally closes for NHS services.

Milk link to Crohn's disease

LIZ HUNT
Health Editor

A research charity yesterday advised thousands of people with a chronic gut disorder not to drink pasteurised milk, following claims of a link between the disease and a "superbug" found in some shop-bought pints.

Scientists say the bacterium, which causes an incurable bowel disease in cattle, may escape destruction by pasteurisation and could be responsible for more than 50,000 cases of Crohn's disease. John Hermon-Taylor, professor of surgery at St George's hospital, London, has found the bacterium, *Mycobacterium paratuberculosis*, is carried by two thirds of sufferers. His team also found the microbe in 6 per cent of samples of retail pasteurised milk.

The Department of Health last night refused to back the charity's advice. A spokesman for the National Farmers' Union said that all steps are being taken to make milk safe.

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Jails leak: Howard's plans to scrap renovation work and remove television sets from cells are exposed

Cuts may force closure of unfit prison blocks

HEATHER MILLS
Home Affairs Correspondent

Significant parts of Britain's jails may be forced to close because they are expected to become unfit for human habitation, a leaked briefing paper to the Home Secretary has disclosed.

It also reveals that Michael Howard is planning to remove televisions from the cells of prisoners in 20 jails – even though he acknowledges that it pacifies inmates and saves on staffing costs. He says television for prisoners does not accord with his "austere regimes".

The paper, seen by the *Independent*, is a background briefing for Mr Howard's latest meeting with prison staff detailing what he was prepared to tell officers – and what he was not.

One of the items of "background only" information was the fact that most modernisation schemes in the country's 136 jails were being dropped next year and that maintenance spending was to be reduced to the "bare minimum".

With jails already full from a record number of 54,000 inmates, the Prison Service expects to be forced to use police cells as sections of at least 14 jails, which have become unsafe through crumbling infrastructure or unsanitary conditions, are closed.

The report says the effect of the cuts in budgets which leaves the service with £100m to spend on its entire building stock and land "may well be the loss of some accommodation ...

because of infrastructure failure owing to inadequate maintenance or because of action by environmental health officers.

"Because margins on likely population and accommodation are so small any loss of accommodation will mean a significant risk of using police cells," it says. The paper also reveals the service is considering the closure of some jails, the merger of others and in the long-term the possible expansion of others.

The briefing document also shows that Mr Howard was able to tell staff that he was going to reject in-cell television – a key recommendation from the Learmont inquiry into security, carried out in the wake of last year's serious escapes. However, he was not prepared to tell staff that those inmates who already have them will be given six months notice of their withdrawal because of the threat to disorder. Nor that convicted prisoners on remand will still be allowed to have them.

Mr Howard's "line", as revealed in the documents, is that in-cell television "is incompatible with government policy that prison regimes should be decent but austere".

His meeting with staff was to discuss the impact of the 13 per cent budget cuts over the next three years. While his line to staff was that they should do their utmost to maintain education and other out-of-cell activities, he would not tell them that 60 per cent of jails were axing education classes.

The briefing paper confirms the 3,000 staff cuts being sought

by the service, but reveals that the Treasury is unlikely to fund the costs of redundancies beyond the beginning of 1997 putting even greater strains on prison resources.

Yesterday, Harry Fletcher, assistant general secretary of the National Association of Probation Officers, said: "This paper makes it clear that prison cuts are compromising inmates' activities as well as internal security. Ministers must learn the lesson that a high incarceration rate is irreconcilable with spending reductions."



Greetings Ma'am: The Queen, in the only public appearance on her 70th birthday, is given flowers at the Church of St Mary Magdalen at Sandringham yesterday. Over 1,000 well-wishers sang 'Happy Birthday' Photograph: Alban Donohoe

Till they meet again

The typical British manager spends almost 20 years in meetings during his or her career, a survey showed today. More than a quarter of that time is spent travelling to and from meetings, yet many of them could have been avoided by a telephone call, fax or letter.

The survey of 500 business managers, commissioned by BT, found they attended six meetings a week on average. A quarter of those interviewed said at least one meeting a week turned out to be pointless or unproductive.

The survey identified a widespread view of meetings as a status symbol – the more someone goes to, the more important they are. More than a third of managers complained that their company had a "meetings culture", in which everything has to be discussed at a meeting.

Some claimed that colleagues fix meetings at the end of the day to get away early, or at a client's office in the morning to get a lie-in.

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DAILY POEM

Many think Quintia's beautiful

By Catullus

Many think Quintia's beautiful. She's tall
And well-proportioned and her skin is white.
I grant her these good points, but I won't call
Her "beautiful". She has one fatal fault –
No sex-appeal: there's not a grain of salt
In that big dish to stir the appetite.
Lesbia is beautiful – not only blessed
With better looks than other girls, but dressed
In the mystery she's stolen from the rest.

Catullus's small quantity of verse fits nicely into the Phoenix series of 60p classics. *From Bed to Bed* is a rather surprising collection of the bawdy and the sensual, at the centre of which is Catullus's passion for the elusive Lesbia of which we are given full and fulsome treatment. Things, as they say, do not go well.

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Henry Sandon
Antiques collector
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Julie Ward mystery: Fresh hope after eight-year fight for justice

Father joins new Kenyan bid to solve bush murder

REBECCA FOWLER

The father of Julie Ward, the murdered British tourist, arrived in Kenya yesterday to join the fresh investigation into her death eight years ago, following the collapse of the initial inquiry in a police cover-up.

John Ward, a hotelier from Bury St Edmunds, Suffolk, has spent more than £500,000 in his own quest to discover the truth behind the murder of Ms Ward, who was 28 when she died. A number of high-ranking Kenyans have been implicated in the crime, including a senior policeman, a politician and a confidante of the president.

At first the Kenyan authorities refused to mount a police investigation at all, or even hunt for Ms Ward's body. Mr Ward hired a plane to search the area immediately after her death, and has subsequently travelled to Kenya more than 60 times and taken on his own private detective.

Despite high-level support for the new inquiry, to be led by six investigators, Mr Ward denied reports that officials have indicated that the Kenyan government is preparing to pay all his expenses in an out-of-court settlement. He is currently taking legal action to recover the money.

Mr Ward said: "I've heard nothing, and no one has indicated they want a meeting to settle the issue of my expenses. There certainly wasn't an envelope waiting for me when I arrived. I'm quite confident we will get the money, but we're certainly not there yet."

Mr Ward launched his own campaign to solve Ms Ward's brutal murder at the remote Masai Mara National Park in September 1988 immediately

after her death when there was no action from the authorities. Within a week he found her severed leg and part of her jaw. The rest of her body was buried with petrol six miles from her abandoned jeep.

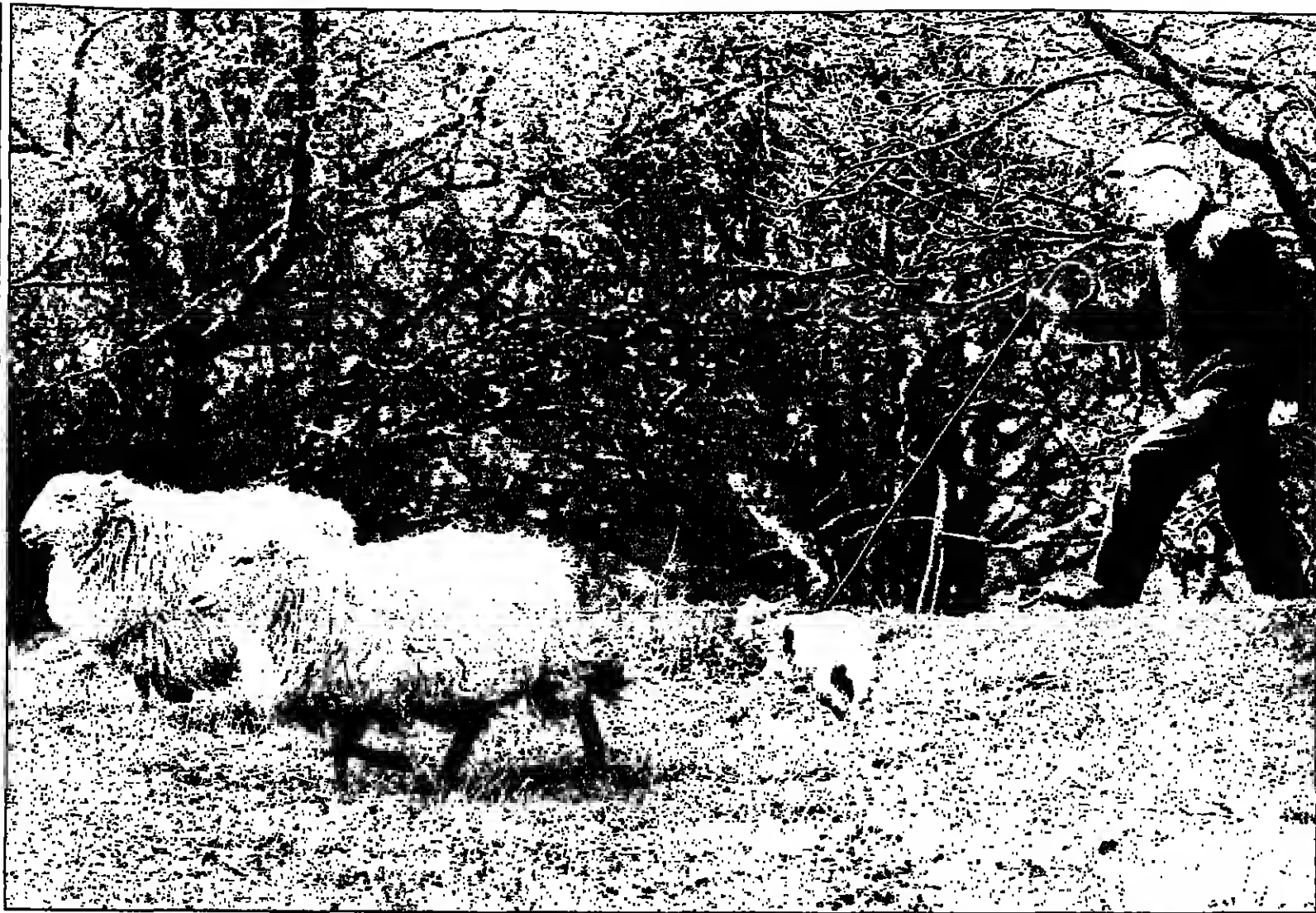
Two game rangers were originally charged with Ms Ward's murder, but they were acquitted in 1992 because of insufficient evidence. The new investigation is expected to focus on statements from a former Kenyan policeman, who claims he witnessed her final hours.

Valentine Kodipo, currently in hiding, said he came across Ms Ward's body while on patrol in the game reserve. He said she was taken bound, gagged and semi-naked from the back of a van and whipped by a number of men including a senior police officer before being bludgeoned to death while a leading politician looked on.

Although Mr Ward is now working alongside the authorities, and his private detective has been made a detective chief inspector for the duration of the investigation, he says that they would never have had a chance of discovering the truth if he had not taken on the case himself.

Mr Ward said: "This investigation really is taking off, and I'm sure the money I have spent will come back. But if I had not had that money to spend at the beginning, we would never have even found her body. Another 24 hours and it would have gone. Then we would never have known what happened to her."

The new investigation may also be backed up by Scotland Yard. Britain and Kenya have agreed to allow the Yard to reopen its own inquiry, but are in dispute over who will pay.



Victim: Sheep farmer Trebor Roberts among his flock at Esgair Garw, still affected by fall-out from Chernobyl

Photograph: Rob Stratton

Nuclear cloud hangs over the hills

The radioactive legacy of Chernobyl persists on the sheep farms and smallholdings of Wales, writes Tony Heath

made life even tougher.

A magistrate and leading figure in the National Farmers' Union, Mr Roberts said: "The crisis was badly handled at the start. Officialdom was complacent, even arrogant. We were told the problem would be over in a few months."

The chronology bears out that criticism. Chernobyl exploded on Saturday, 26 April, 1986; over the weekend heavy radioactive rain soaked north Wales.

The deluge triggered monitoring alarms at Trawsfynydd nuclear power station a dozen miles across the mountains from the Roberts' farm.

It was not until 20 June that

the Government admitted there was a problem and imposed restrictions which quarantined some 2 million sheep on about 5,000 farms in Wales.

Eventually, after a number of measures were floated — some of which could only be described as outlandish — a programme of monitoring and marking was introduced.

Now, sheep leaving a restricted area are scanned by Ministry of Agriculture officials using hand-held radiation counters. Failures are marked with streaks of apricot paint to show they cannot be sold for meat. The colour is regularly changed by decree.

Radioactivity falls when

sheep are moved to cleaner pastures and buyers of marked sheep can have them monitored again until they pass.

Farmers are paid £1.30 compensation for each scan. The real problem is in the marketing. Mr Roberts explained: "Say I need to send 30 animals to market. I have to give the Ministry seven days' notice. They come along and test and fail ten, so I can take 20 to market, by which time the price could move against me and as I'm only able to sell two-thirds I don't get the income I need."

From the window of the 200-year-old farmhouse, he looks across the valley to a neighbouring holding. "Only a mile

or two over there the restrictions have been lifted" he says wistfully.

The trouble for farmers like Mr Roberts lies in the ground. Much of the soil on his 1,000 acres is peaty, holding the radioactivity tenaciously.

A long association with the land breeds an equally tenacious doggedness. "We have learned to live with the effects of the crisis. It's very bad, but then you think of the people still suffering at Chernobyl itself."

This month several deformed lambs have been born on the farm. One had no lower jaw, another was missing bones. A third delivered by Mr Roberts' son, Emyln, seemed like a solid mass of gristle.

"We've not seen anything like that before," said Mr Roberts.

Blood-thirsty sucker in need of warm shelter

NICHOLAS SCHOON
Environment Correspondent

The wild, blood-sucking medicinal leech is clinging on at the edge of extinction. Huge numbers are raised in captivity because it is still used in medicine, particularly to make anti-blood coagulating agents and in plastic surgery.

But in the wild the leech, a relative of the earthworm, is globally threatened and in Britain there are only a few small, widely scattered populations. The species is one of 116 animals and plants for which rescue plans have been proposed by a joint government and wildlife charities committee.

Several of these populations are in lochs in Argyll. When surveyors from Scottish Natural Heritage, a government wildlife conservation arm, went to look for the leech last year at eight sites where it had been previously recorded, they only found it in two. "Every species has a right to exist in its natural habitat," says Martin Gaywood, who looks after the leech for SNH. "The medicinal leech is rather a charismatic species — people are both repulsed and intrigued by them."

Heritage
of the wild



Medicinal leech: Few left

The leech is also found on the island of Anglesey, Cumbria, and a few sites in southern England. Its stronghold is on the shingle spit of Drungess, but the total UK population only amounts to a few thousand.

The species needs warm (and therefore shallow), nutrient rich and fairly still waters with abundant water plants. The two-inch long adults are her-

maphrodites and lay egg-containing cocoons in the late summer. In the following spring tadpoles are an important food source for the young leeches.

The medicinal leech is much larger than all but one of the other dozen species found in Britain, and it also has the most catholic diet — it will attach itself to mammals (including us), birds, amphibians and fish. It swims towards a source of movement in the water, inserts its sucker, injects a little anti-coagulant and drinks deep, taking up to five times its own body weight in blood. Once full it drops off and lies low, spending the next few weeks or even months digesting the meal.

Collection for medicinal purposes may have been an important bygone reason for its decline in Britain and elsewhere (although this may also be how it arrived here from Europe in the first place).

The rescue plan calls for nationwide survey to pinpoint its remaining haunts by the year 2000, with safeguards for all of these. Ponds should be dug near some of these water bodies to provide extra habitat. The maximum annual cost of this programme is put at £17,000.

Bank blast linked to blackmailer

PAUL FIELD

Scotland Yard detectives were last night still investigating whether the blast outside a Barclays branch was the work of the mystery blackmailer known as Mardi Gra who has been waging a letter-bomb campaign against the bank.

Three people were slightly injured when the small device exploded without warning at the height of the Saturday afternoon shopping rush at Ealing Broadway, west London.

The homemade bomb was in a flowerbed in an alley to the side of a Barclays branch, just

yards from three cash dispensing machines. Shoppers were evacuated from the scene within minutes and anti-terrorist branch officers spent almost four hours combing the area for forensic evidence.

It was the second time in three days that a bomb had exploded in west London, but police ruled out suggestions that it could be the work of the IRA, owing to the small size of the improvised device. Yesterday, officers were examining the possibility of a link to the terror campaign against Barclays.

Earlier this month it emerged that a blackmailer had been ter-

rifying Barclays for 16 months. Calling himself Mardi Gra, the extortionist has posted or planted more than 25 devices. Until Saturday no one had been badly hurt because the devices were all missing a part of the detonator.

The blackmailer, described by detectives as an obsessive man, appears to have taken a great pride in his work — bombs have been meticulously packaged and he has used distinctive logos and wording. He first struck in December 1994, when he sent six devices to Barclays branches in north-west London. Only one went off, burning the hands

of the woman who opened it.

The devices have been fitted into video boxes and books, and featured shotgun cartridges and bullets designed to explode when opened. Most devices were sent to addresses in London, direct to the bank, its officials, companies connected to them or placed in telephone boxes outside banks.

Last night a Barclays spokesman said that the bank had received no further information from the police as to the identity of the bomber. "It is of great concern to us. Obviously we are sending out regular advice to staff and this will continue."

Pay body backs 30 per cent rise for MPs

COLIN BROWN
Chief Political Correspondent

A record 30 per cent increase in pay is expected to be recommended by the top salaries review body before MPs pack their bags for their long summer recess. The Government is unlikely to block the move, which could raise MPs' salaries by more than £10,000 — from £34,350 to about £45,000 a year.

The recommended rises for

MPs' pay by the Senior Salaries Review Body, disclosed in the *Independent on Sunday*, threaten to boom on John Major.

He backed moves to refer the issue of MPs' pay in the body in the hope of defusing it.

But its recommendations are likely to cause a public outcry, and leave the Government in a dilemma in the run-up to the general election. Ministers are also likely to distance themselves from the recommendations, leaving it to MPs

themselves to decide whether to accept the proposals in full.

There could be a series of votes on the issue before the summer recess at the end of July. Tory MPs are keen to increase their salaries, because they fear the tough new rules on public standards, following the Nolan report, will limit the scope for them to supplement their official salaries with private earnings outside Westminster.

Mr Major is blamed by some

private incomes, by setting up the Nolan committee. Some left-wing Labour MPs have opposed increases in salaries for MPs, and may vote against any further rises, but the numbers could be increased if MPs are embarrassed by the size of the rise so close to the election.

It could also enhance their pensions if they lose their seats at the election. That would be seen as feather-bedding for the future, rather than getting a fair rate for the job.

However, some senior backbenchers believe MPs remain underpaid. Frank Field, the Labour chairman of the Commons Social Security Select Committee, said that MPs should be paid two rates, with a lower rate for those who take outside work.

Sir Edward Heath, the former prime minister, said in a *GMTV* interview yesterday that MPs should get £100,000 a year, but the number of MPs should be halved to about 325.

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international

Clinton-Yeltsin summit plays to the voters

Re-election hopes featured heavily at the weekend meeting, writes Phil Reeves

Moscow — A lacklustre Boris Yeltsin had five hours of talks with his friend and fan Bill Clinton in Moscow yesterday, in which they differed over Nato, made progress on two arms-control treaties, and did their best to help one another keep their jobs.

It was their 10th meeting in three years and allowed Mr Clinton to attempt to give a hefty nudge to Mr Yeltsin's campaign handwagon before June's presidential elections.

Mr Clinton, facing an election in November, warmly supported Russia's economic reforms, although he was careful not to go as far as Germany's Helmut Kohl, who has openly said he wants to see Mr Yeltsin stay in the Kremlin. Although the presidents hugged and complimented one another, there was none of the backslapping merriment of the summit in New York last October.

Their discussions followed the G7 summit in Moscow on nuclear safety convened at the request of Mr Yeltsin, who has long harboured ambitions to join the leading industrialised nations, so far without success.

Although the two-day affair was marred by a domestic row over the death of 50 federal soldiers in a Chechen ambush, and overshadowed by Lebanon, it was not an outright disaster for Mr Yeltsin, and may even have allowed him to register some modest gains.

Above all, he managed not to commit any behavioural gaffes and although he seemed downbeat, he appeared in reasonable shape, and did nothing to heighten worries over his health which flared up last year with his second heart attack.

He berated his guests about Nato enlargement, which will have annoyed them but have gone down well with the electorate. Yesterday Mr Clinton said his position on Nato was unchanged, but in no "way, shape or form does it mean a threat to the security or legitimate interests of Russia".

At a joint press conference, Mr Yeltsin even squeezed in some overt campaign sloganeering. Asked about his prospects of heading off a Communist challenge for the Kremlin, he retorted: "I'm not going to answer that, because I'm sure victory will be mine." This is disputed by Gennady Zyuganov, the Communist leader, whom Mr Clinton met last night. The Russian — who, rivals warn, will bring back Soviet-style Communism — told him he wanted "long-term, good-neighbourly and normal relations" with the US.

Mr Yeltsin also seized the opportunity to try to convince voters he is fulfilling his promise to end the Chechen conflict before the election. In remarks that will astonish recent visitors to villages in southern Chechnya, which have been bombed

and shelled, he said there had been "no military operations" in Chechnya since 31 March. "It is another thing that some gangs are still there running around." Nineteen of Chechnya's 22 regions had signed peace deals, he said. But Chechnya "must and will" remain within Russia, a view Mr Clinton endorsed.

After their meeting yesterday, Mr Clinton said important progress had been made on the agreement on Conventional Forces in Europe, and the Anti-Ballistic Missile treaty. Russia has been accused of breaching the former by having too many troops in the Caucasus; the latter involves a dispute over the definition of the missiles covered under the treaty.

But as the flags and banners came down in Moscow, Russians may well have been wondering whether they had witnessed much sound and fury, but nothing of significance.

The G7's main agreements on nuclear safety contained no surprises and no historical advances. Even the agreement to have a complete ban on nuclear testing — perhaps its most significant achievement — depends on settling differences with China and India.

Mr Yeltsin has been told to raise the issue with Peking later this week, during his trip to China — another fixture which has as much to do with his efforts to be re-elected as with global affairs.



Pointing the way: Mr Clinton with Mr Yeltsin yesterday. They differed over Nato enlargement but made progress on two arms treaties. Photograph: Reuters

Tight result forecast as Italy votes

ANDREW GUMBEL
Rome

With everything still to play for after a tightly contested campaign, Italian voters flocked to the polls yesterday for their third general election in four years, hoping above all for a clear result to enable the country to end its chronic political instability.

Early indications suggested that turnout among the country's 49 million eligible voters would be high, helping widespread forecasts of voter cynicism about how much this election can really change.

The results, which will probably have to be digested carefully even after they are announced early this morning, will point to one of three outcomes.

■ A victory for the centre-left coalition known as the Olive, or Olive Tree, led by the Bolognese economist Romano Prodi and supported by the mainstream left as well as progressive Christian Democrats, environmentalists and the outgoing prime minister, Lamberto Dini. This would mark a historic turning point for the Italian left, which has been excluded from national government since the war.

■ A victory for the centre-right, led by Silvio Berlusconi and his reformed neo-fascist ally Gianfranco Fini. This would restore the government led by Mr Berlusconi after the last election in March 1994, but without the support of the separatist Northern League, which has since gone its own way. Its programme this time is less moderate, less committed to the free market and more Euro-sceptic.

■ No clear result. This could lead to another "technical" government similar to the one

led by Mr Dini for the last 15 months, or a broad cross-party coalition committed to institutional reforms, or total breakdown followed by another general election.

Opinion polls have been banned for the last three weeks, but private surveys have pointed to a slight advantage for the Olive, which has the confidence of the financial markets and many of Italy's foreign partners. But the exact nature of the new government will depend on the detail of the result. Trends to watch out for include:

■ The relative strength of Mr Berlusconi's Forza Italia and Mr Fini's National Alliance. The moderate wing of Mr Berlusconi's party has been steadily squeezed over the past two years as Mr Fini has grown stronger; a poor result for Mr Berlusconi could force his retirement from politics and the collapse of his party.

■ The performance of the Northern League which, according to the private surveys, could be a big beneficiary if Forza Italia fades, allowing it to hold the balance of power. Both main blocs have spurned alliances with the League because it is considered unpredictable and dangerously separatist, but they might have to change their minds.

■ The performance of Mr Dini, another pivotal figure. Although standing with the centre-left, he is a conservative by nature and a former Berlusconi acolyte. If the result is close, and if he does well, he might emerge as a compromise candidate for prime minister, attracting support not only from the Olive but also from disillusioned moderate members of Forza Italia.

Shogi bears fruit with a champion for Japan's youth



Habu: King of shogi — a game played by 20 million

champion vowed, his lovely bride at his side. "I am cleaving to a fresh resolve but I must act responsibly — both as a shogi player and as a member of society."

Richard Lloyd Parry

Japan, a country of powerful groups rather than charismatic individuals, has never been a great breeding ground for heroes, but the last year has seen the emergence of a surprising number.

Sumo wrestling fans have been electrified by a pair of boyish brothers named Wakanoana and Takanohana, who last year transferred to the Los Angeles Dodgers, has gained a following across America. But this year the spotlight has fallen on a different, and unlikely role model: a skinny, bespectacled 25-year-old named Yoshiharu Habu.

Habu is a grand master of

shogi, an ancient Japanese game with rules and terminology very similar to chess. Shogi is played on an 81-square board, with flat wooden counters each bearing a Chinese character; as well as familiar pieces like kings, bishops and knights, the player manipulates jewels, lancers, and gold and silver generals.

Like chess, it requires a combination of precise technique and imaginative intuition, qualities central to Japanese culture, from judo to landscape gardening. "Habu's most powerful weapon is the inspiration he gets from the right side of his brain," explained a eulogistic profile in the weighty *Yomiuri* newspaper.

"This inspiration is being called 'Habu magic'."

There are 20 million shogi players in Japan and in February Habu climbed to the very top of the heap by winning all seven of the major championships. His frowning countenance has appeared in countless newspapers and magazines, and even on a promotional poster for the Tokyo metropolitan police. But shogi skills alone do not explain this sudden celebrity — Habu's appeal lies in the combination of his youth with a very old fashioned and traditional sensibility.

In appearance he is unprepossessing to the point of nerdiness — pale, skinny and

LOCAL HEROES: 13

Yoshiharu Habu

owl-like, habitually photographed hunched over the board in the traditional male kimono, waiting himself with a paper fan. Shogi players are by nature a reticent bunch but Habu has surprised even them with his undemonstrativeness.

Even after clinching the grand slam he did not allow himself the traditional clenched fist victory salute, although he caused a minor scandal when he

was seen applying lip balm before a crucial game. The significance of this action is elusive, but it raised eyebrows in the rarefied shogi world. "Such a gesture may not have appeared altogether appropriate for a top player on the verge of winning all seven titles," the *Yomiuri's* critic cautioned.

The younger generation of Japanese — well-fed, well-off and bored — are the cause of much anxious talk among journalists and the orisers, and commentators are in no doubt about the significance of Habu's rise, and that of his sporting compatriots.

"Unlike the traditional image of a genius — an aloof person with a strong sense of individ-

uality — all of these young heroes are polite, quiet and thoughtful, and have pleasant personalities," observed one profile.

Evidence suggests, however, that Habu is more fun than he looks. Despite his sober demeanour, he won the envy of young men all over Japan last month by marrying Ise Hatada, a beautiful actress popular for her roles in several television dramas. The ceremony was a traditional rite held at a local Shinto shrine, but Ise's world was not to be further from Yoshiharu's: a few weeks before the wedding there was great excitement when she was assaulted in Tokyo's station,

apparently by a crazed male fan. Shogi is an all-consuming game, and the emotional and intellectual demands have been the death of more than one marriage. An old folk song tells the tragic story of a man whose obsession with the game cost him everything. Much of his pathos is lost in translation, but the first line is salutary: "I have staked my life on little shogi pieces which would disappear if I blew on them."

But if anyone can combine the demands of domestic bliss and shogi mastery, it is Habu, as he made clear at the couple's post-nuptial press conference. "We will combine our energy to build a happy household," the

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EU plans cross-border database on refugees

As immigration controls are tightened, there are fears the system will be open to abuse, writes Sarah Helm

Plans are being finalised in Brussels for a Europe-wide refugee database, which will hold the fingerprints of every asylum-seeker who applies for refuge in an EU country.

The database, to be called Eurodac, is viewed by refugee agencies as another sign that Europe is erecting an ever-tighter "ring-fence" against asylum-seekers and immigrants. Civil liberties lawyers caution that a database for refugees could set a precedent for other EU-wide personal data systems, to assist in policing and internal security throughout a border-free Europe.

Britain already has a national system for fingerprinting asylum-seekers, and France has signalled its intention to set up a national scheme. The plan being drawn up in Brussels envisages an unprecedented cross-border data-sharing system.

According to a confidential draft convention on Eurodac now circulating between justice ministries, a central computer would be based in one EU capital — possibly Rome — with linking terminals in each member state. Immigration officials in each country would have access to the fingerprint database, and would use the information to see if an applicant had applied elsewhere in Europe.

The stated intention is to further harmonise refugee policy in each member state and prevent applicants who are refused entry to one EU country, from moving on to apply in another. Under an existing convention, EU countries have already agreed that an asylum-

seeker refused entry in one country should be refused entry by all.

Refugee bodies, including the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, fear that the database could be open to wide-scale abuse. Security agencies in the asylum-seeker's country of origin could gain access to the data, thereby placing applicants at risk should they be forced to return home. Asylum-seekers would have few rights to check information held on computer, where details on why an application was made and refused will also be stored. The EU officials are discussing whether the information should be made available for internal police investigations or to other EU authorities.

Friso Roscam-Abbing, of the European Consultation of Refugees and Exiles, said: "Our main fear is that the information about an asylum-seeker would get back to the applicant's country of origin, leading to further persecution."

The proposals are not a European Commission initiative and have not yet been presented to the European Parliament for approval. Neither the UN High Commissioner for Refugees nor any other interested bodies have been consulted on the plan, which is being discussed in secret between officials of justice ministries in member states, under the inter-governmental system of co-operation, established for justice and home affairs issues under the Maastricht treaty. As such there is extremely limited scope for democratic consultation. Once

the plans have been finalised by civil servants, they will be presented for agreement to Europe's justice ministers. Britain, which opposes most new centralising initiatives proposed in Brussels, is expected to support Eurodac as a means of strengthening immigration controls.

"The human rights implications are enormous, yet decisions like this just go through on the nod," said David Burgess, a leading British asylum lawyer. "Either we are creating a two-tier system of rights — one for third country nationals and another for EU nationals. Or we are going to accept that holding information on huge groups of people like this is normal."

The Eurodac scheme follows a series of measures taken jointly by EU member states aimed at co-ordinating asylum procedures, in the wake of fears of growing numbers of so-called "economic migrants" seeking to enter the EU. Common methods for processing asylum seekers have been agreed, as has a common visa list, under which member states impose visa requirements on a single list of countries. A single EU visa will also soon be issued.

The numbers seeking asylum in the EU have already been significantly reduced. As the ring-fence is erected, it is envisaged that internal border checks between EU member states will be further relaxed allowing EU citizens to move more freely. Britain, however, still opposes reduction of internal border controls despite the new measures for exterior frontier controls.

IN BRIEF

Aid money used for child sex allegation

Sydney — An independent investigation will be conducted into accusations that Australian diplomats in Asia used aid money to buy access to orphans for child sex, the government said yesterday. Foreign Minister Alexander Downer announced the inquiry during an official visit to Thailand's capital, Bangkok, after Sydney's *Sun-Herald* newspaper reported the allegations. AP

'Drunken' Russians in lethal accident

Moscow — An armoured personnel carrier carrying eight drunken Russian servicemen crashed into a truck before levelling a car region bordering Chechnya, the Itar-Tass news agency reported. The 10-ton vehicle was part of a Russian Interior Ministry column heading for Chechnya. AP

Kenyan party condemns government

Nairobi — Kenya's opposition Safina party, still awaiting official registration, yesterday appealed to Western countries to condemn the Nairobi government for what it called its hostility to political opposition. Richard Leakey, a renowned palaeontologist and secretary-general of Safina, said in a letter to the Nairobi envoys of the United States, Japan and several European countries that the government had demonstrated it did not want the next elections to be "fair, let alone free". Reuters

New leader for Nigerian Muslims

Lagos — Muhammad Maccido, the choice of the people of Sokoto in northern Nigeria, was yesterday named Sultan of Sokoto, the traditional leader of Nigerian Muslims, local journalists said. The military government on Saturday and arrested. Reuters

Correction

In Saturday's *Independent*, in the article titled "Egypt undergoes a change of heart" by Adel Darwish on page 9, the two quotes advising Hizbollah to reject the ceasefire proposal were in fact Ali Khamenei. The omission of two lines from the original meant they were incorrectly attributed to Sheikh Sayed Tantawi, the head of the Egyptian Official Church, Al-Azhar University.

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UN evidence heaps more blame on Israelis

Three days after the Israeli slaughter of at least 110 Lebanese refugees at the United Nations peace-keeping post in Qana, the UN has said that the Israeli soldiers whose headquarters were blasted apart by the Israeli guns have placed a small spray of coloured plastic flowers in the crater of a shell that killed 40 people. But less happy sentiments are being expressed among the UN troops as evidence is slowly amassed about what actually happened in the minutes last Thursday when the UN compound was turned into a replica of the Sarajevo market massacre.

The evidence includes UN witnesses who saw a pilot-less Israeli reconnaissance drone taking photographs over the compound as the slaughter went on. If this was of the type that transmits live television pictures – which the Israelis are known to possess – then the Israeli artillerymen must have known what they were shooting at within seconds. UN troops have also established that the three bearded Hizbollah men who fired the two Katyushas and four mortars whom the Israelis claim they were firing at 300 metres from the compound, were later identified by Fijian troops running into the UN compound for protection just before the bombardment. They may be among the dead.

UN technical personnel have also concluded that all 12 shells to hit the base were 155mm shells with M-733 proximity fuses which exploded each round seven metres above the ground, thus causing maximum casualties and what in military parlance is called "amputation wounds": in other words, they cut off arms, legs and heads. They were fired from new American M109A1 howitzers which need a forward artillery "spatter" – in this case presumably the drone – and which are almost impossible to fire inaccurately.



Robert Fisk hears that shells fired on Qana were designed to cause maximum casualties and could hardly be fired inaccurately

position, including Qana. The remarks were made after Israeli artillery rounds repeatedly landed close to UN supply convoys taking blankets and food to civilians at the UN posts. It has also emerged that in the two minutes after the Katyushas were fired from a cemetery to the north of the Fijian compound, another 260 civilians, inhabitants of Qana who had hitherto stayed in their homes, ran in panic through the gates of the post – along with the three Hizbollah men – bringing the total number of refugees in around 880. Fearing retaliation on the area – though not, of course, on their compound – Fijian soldiers began to pack as many refugees as they could into their bunkers, physically pushing women and children into the concrete interiors

until no more could be accommodated. "We wanted women in first but mothers here have three or four children and they wouldn't go into the bunkers with three children and leave the fourth lost outside," a Fijian officer said yesterday. "They were hunting for children who had run off and were playing with friends. They were crying because they couldn't find them. Then the first Israeli shells came in." Another soldier described what happened next. "There were shrieks of agony and pain as the shell fragments cut off the legs and arms and heads of the refugees. They sounded like animals who had gone mad. We desperately tried to get UN operations to tell the Israelis to stop. But the Israelis didn't respond; they just sent us

a 'shell warning' – after the people were already being massacred. The UN pleaded with them to stop but they went on shelling for 12 minutes." A third soldier, lying on the ground at a position outside the compound, saw the first Israeli 155mm round hit the battalion's water tower. "Then I heard terrible screams and shrieking. People started bursting from the compound gate, trying to run away, people without hands, people with blood spurting out of them. There was a woman without a hand making a terrible squealing noise and a man whose foot had been torn off running on the stump of his leg in panic leaving a stream of blood behind him. Then more shells came in and exploded mostly among the women and

Truth brings reality to PR show at Qana

ROBERT FISK
Qana, southern Lebanon

Hervé de Charette's face was as white as death. The French Foreign Minister, neatly clad in blue suit and tie, had gingerly walked through the scene of last week's massacre at the UN's compound, nodding diplomatically as the UN's Fijian commander described the 12 minutes in which Israeli shells slaughtered up to 120 refugees, the sliced-up corpses that his soldiers were forced to pick up, the difficulty in identifying parts of the children who had been torn to pieces. Mr de Charette

wrong. "We have lived through hell," Mrs Zrir continued. "The people were chopped into pieces by the Israeli bombs. You should have seen the heads." At the French foreign minister's right, a Lebanese softly translated the woman's dreadful words. The PR men began to look uneasy. "We have lived here 40 years and now we are treated like animals," the woman cried. "Do you know what the dogs did at night after the killings? They were hungry and I saw them in the ruins eating fingers and pieces of our people."



After the storm: Fijian UN soldiers in Qana clearing away the debris left by last week's Israeli shelling of their headquarters in the village in south Lebanon that killed more than 100 refugees. Photograph: Hassan Hamed/Reuters

"The people were chopped into pieces by the Israeli bombs. You should have seen the heads"

listened with distaste. But then he was confronted by a survivor. Fawzaya Zrir, a small, frail woman in a scarf, simply walked up to the French foreign minister and began talking to him with an odd mixture of affection and anger. "For us, France is our mother and God is our father," she said in a flight of rhetoric that might have been written by the Quai d'Orsay public relations men, who beamed happily at this fortunate encounter. Then things began to go

Mr de Charette stared at her as if he had seen a ghost. This had clearly not been part of the programme, a schedule that was supposed to have whisked the foreign minister from a light lunch at UN headquarters in Naqoura to a photo-opportunity on the roof of the wrecked UN battalion HQ, a three-minute press conference to give the impression of openness and a swift drive back to the coast and a helicopter to Beirut – everything, in fact, that would enhance France's much-trumpeted love for Lebanon. Reality had very definitely not been part of the programme.

This is all for show. And they won't even have the guts to condemn Israel – even now – for this wickedness." And indeed, the UN Secretary-General did send General Frank Van Knapen of the Netherlands Army – not, perhaps, a happy choice after the Dutch army's disgrace at Srebrenica – and he duly marched round the site of the worst carnage, asking how many rounds landed, where the Katyusha missiles were fired from and whether he could be shown this site to discover if any Israeli shells had fallen there.

Mr de Charette was even more gentle of spirit. What had happened on Thursday was "unfortunate", an event for which France wished to show its sympathy for the Lebanese. So how did it rank in the scale of civilian atrocities? How did it rank, for example, beside the Sarajevo market massacre?

"Frankly," the Foreign Minister replied sharply, "I have not had an opportunity to make categories of unhappiness. What we have to work to do is to make it impossible for this to happen in the future in Lebanon." And so say all of us. Did he believe Israel had given sufficient explanation of the massacre? "I hear there is an inquiry. We have to await the results."

And you can see their point. On the coast road back to Beirut last night there were burning cars, civilians deliberately targeted by Israeli warships north of Sidon, three of whom had been badly wounded. Had this been a Syrian warship shelling Israeli civilians on the Haifa-Jel Aviv road, of course, Mr Clinton himself would have deplored – rightly – an act of "international terrorism". But not a word of criticism about this scandalous targeting of Lebanese civilians was uttered by the foreign ministers of America, Russia, France and Italy as they sought to bring an end to an apparently unstoppable war.

Peres turns to US diplomacy

PATRICK COCKBURN
Jerusalem

In search of a ceasefire in Lebanon, Warren Christopher, the US Secretary of State, yesterday shuttled between Damascus and Jerusalem to talk with President Hafez al-Assad of Syria and Shimon Peres, the Prime Minister of Israel.

slaughter of 105 Lebanese refugees at Qana, Israel is very dependent on American diplomatic strength and goodwill. Meanwhile, there are growing signs of disagreement in the Israeli armed forces. A senior officer in the Northern Command of the Israeli army was quoted by the daily *Ha'aretz* as saying: "As far as we are concerned, [the operation] was a failure... yesterday the terrorists fired more than 100 Katyushas into northern Israel."

The officer said that Israeli military intelligence miscalculated the strength of Hizbollah. He said: "Obviously, they will try to shift the blame... but the biggest fiasco of this operation is military intelligence's."

Immediately after the Qana incident the General Staff reportedly curtailed Israeli army activity – though this is contradicted by Lebanese observers – and Major General Amnon Levine, the head of Northern Command, is said to be "low and very angry".

Mr Peres faces an election in six weeks. If he is seen by Israeli voters to have caved in under international pressure, this could cost him the election. At the same time, Israeli-Arab voters, who yesterday called a day of mourning because of the attack on Lebanon, may stay at home on 29 May.

Mr Christopher arrived in Jerusalem yesterday morning for two hours of talks with Mr Peres. The US and Israel are eager to fend off intervention by Russia and France, whose foreign ministers are also in the area. Mr Peres said: "If there is more than one channel there will be total confusion." He added that a ceasefire was possible "in a number of days". President Assad assured Mr Christopher that he would urge Hizbollah to seek a ceasefire. The US wants Syria to rein in Hizbollah in return for Israel limiting the freedom of action of its army. The ceasefire would be supervised by a body headed by the US. After the

This week in THE INDEPENDENT

This week and every week, Section Two has a new look, with more pages, new features, a daily radio column and an expanded listings section providing Britain's most comprehensive daily guide to going out.

on Monday

A new regular section, *Family Life*, that deals with the interests and problems of parents and children. Julie Myerson's column also focuses on home life. Plus: a new series – Do we need? – which challenges the icons of modern Britain. And, every Monday unrivalled coverage of the expanding world of information technology in our Network pull-out section.

on Tuesday

Health: how wearing a virtual reality helmet could help cure phobias and other psychological problems. Plus: flaky nails are not simply a problem for the vain.

on Wednesday

Budget Jones's diary continues to chronicle the encounters and exquisite embarrassments in the life of Britain's most-read spinster. Plus: the midweek travel section, your money, finance

on Thursday

All our regular features, including Virginia Ironside's Dilemmas, John Walsh's column, plus film, education

on Friday

24Seven – a new 20-page pull-out-and-keep entertainment and listings section. Including a complete day-by-day planner for the week ahead, plus

on Saturday

seven-day TV, radio and satellite listings, ticket offers and informed comment on the week's highlights. Plus: eight pages of pop and classical music

on Sunday

and law. In our back pages, Martin Newell, Britain's leading rock poet, and Neil Kerber, one of the country's funniest cartoonists, present their views of the modern world.

Monday

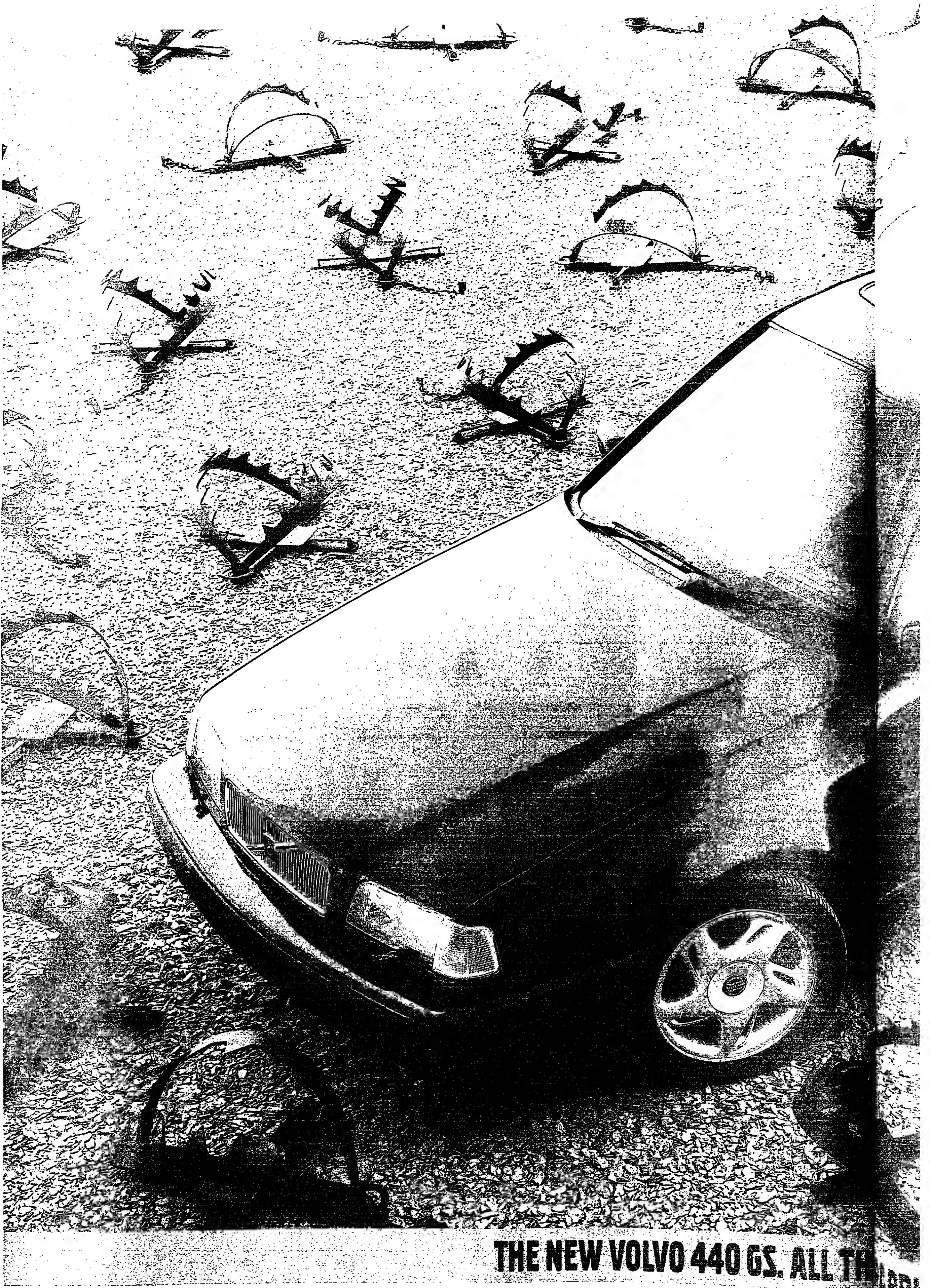
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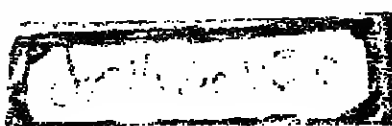
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international

Nation the West must nurture, not neglect.

Liberia

THE WAR AT THE
END OF THE WORLD

Liberia's civil war has been going on for six years. An estimated 150,000 people have died. The latest flare-up began on 6 April when one of the main militia leaders, Charles Taylor, tried to have a rival, Roosevelt Johnson, arrested for murder. After fierce fighting in the capital, Monrovia, Johnson loyalists are now holed up in a barracks with 10,000 civilians. The US has been evacuating foreigners, and trying to ensure that a ceasefire agreed on Friday holds. This week, in a series of articles, the *Independent* will seek to show how Liberia came to grief, and how its state is the result not of some inescapable dynamic of insanity, but of political choices in Liberia, west Africa and the outside world. This is not just an academic debate, and has relevance way beyond this small state.

PHILIPPA ATKINSON

Unlike its French-speaking neighbours, Liberia is a nation of rice-eaters. The Liberians, in their distinctive American-English accents, complain of hunger if they don't eat rice at least once a day.

During the last six years of war, this may have become a common complaint, but they have grown used to it, along with the other hazards of war—fleeing their houses, losing their families, and watching their politicians fighting as up to 150,000 people have died. They are strong people, and little surprises them: even the latest outbreak of fighting is seen as just another step on the long road to peace.

It might surprise them to learn that beyond their borders, commentators cast doubt on the very existence of their country. Liberia has been classified with Somalia as a "disintegrating nation", with a sovereignty

supposedly as fictitious as its borders. Reporting on the civil war has depicted a scene of chaos, greed and strange tribal fighting. Sensationalist stories of black magic and cannibalistic rituals convey the impression of a "weird" war, fought purely for the joy of destruction. One journalist said "there is no political ideology behind such wars": blind ethnic hatred is offered in the absence of any better explanation.

Portrayal of the war in Liberia as savage and anarchic has fuelled the growing consensus—particularly in US policy circles—that African wars, being primitive, tribal, or just incomprehensible, are beyond the reach of Western help. It has even been suggested that the lack of a democratic tradition or strong base of educated middle-class people means that it is not worth the West committing its scarce resources to intervening in these conflicts.

Some argue that we would be better off concentrating our resources on countries that, in some strategic or economic sense, are "worth saving". These cultural, or even racist arguments against intervention are added to a history of failed military deployments to strengthen the case of isolationists.

Yet it is precisely the danger of this "hands-off" approach that has been demonstrated in Liberia. Avoiding direct en-



Shoot-out: Soldiers belonging to Charles Taylor's militia firing at rival Krahn militia holed up in barracks in Monrovia for more than a week

Photograph: Corinne Dufka

agement in the war, the US and UN have become involved by proxy, through their political and financial support for the West African peace-keeping force, Ecomog.

While this may once have seemed expedient, it has backfired. Over its six-year deployment Ecomog has not only failed to implement any of the 13 peace agreements, but has become a major player in the war and the war economy.

Attempts to address the Nigerian domination of the force have failed due to a lack of will and funding. The small UN observer force, UNOMIL, fielded since 1993, has been ineffectual, becoming the first

target for Monrovia's frustrated youth in the latest fighting. The world has let Liberia down.

This highlights the paradox of the West's attitude to African wars: the international community has been unwilling to commit itself, and yet has intervened anyway.

The cost in humanitarian aid, already over \$500m (£330m), and of rebuilding the country, continues to rise. Investment in preventative diplomacy has been acknowledged as the most cost-effective way to tackle potential emergencies, but it must be backed up by both an understanding of the problem, and by the proper funding. Some of the fighters in

Liberia are out of control, and some have committed heinous atrocities. Many, however, are waiting, along with the rest of the country and nearly one million refugees, for the war to end so they can resume their lives.

Before the latest outbreak of fighting, much work had already been done on rebuilding, from infrastructure to counselling workshops for both victims and perpetrators of the conflict.

Up to 20,000 of the estimated 60,000 combatants have already been demobilised through the various programmes. Some of them have received sponsorship for education and vocational training. This work had been done with

the support of the aid community, but it was initiated by the Liberian people.

Liberia is the oldest nation-state in Africa. It was inaugurated as a republic 150 years ago, which makes it older than many European countries. One aid worker described its people as "the most educated and entrepreneurial refugees I've ever worked with". That the international community wants to help is shown by its continued donations of millions of dollars.

But to really help, the world must see Liberia as more than another African "descent into chaos". Only then will there be a chance for Liberians to eat rice every day of the week again.

Gunmen free 127 from barracks

Monrovia (Reuters) — Militia gunmen holed up in a barracks yesterday freed 127 people, including 71 foreigners, among thousands trapped there, peacekeepers said.

The African peace-keeping force Ecomog said the release came after negotiations that also enabled it to take control of central Monrovia after two weeks of militia warfare.

A total of 203 people have now been freed from the barracks, according to an Ecomog statement, where some 10,000 people are being held. The foreigners were mostly West Africans but included 32 Lebanese, five Pakistanis and two Chinese.

The US has announced that it is sending a team of diplomats led by the Deputy Assistant Secretary of State William Twardell will be sent to Liberia to help broker an end to the recent fighting.

Donor differences hold up aid deal

RUPERT CORNWELL
Washington

Finance ministers of G7, the club of seven most powerful industrial countries, met here yesterday to discuss how to pep up the flagging European economy, and advance an International Monetary Fund/World Bank plan to increase debt relief for the poorest nations.

At issue in the discussions, held on the sidelines of annual spring sessions of the two agencies are proposals—strongly pressed by Britain—to channel \$7bn (£4.6bn) to \$8bn from eight to 20 countries, mostly in sub-Saharan Africa, and all crushed under servicing payments so high they have no hope

of running down the original debt.

The talks were expected to generate agreement that something must be done. However, the devil, as always, lay in the detail: over how much of the new aid should come from the IMF and other institutions, and how much individually from G7 and other wealthy developed countries, and the role to be played by the Enhanced Structural Adjustment Facility, the Fund's existing facility for the neediest countries.

Of the \$8bn, the IMF and other multilateral institutions want to limit their contribution to about a third. But that presupposes a willingness by the "Paris Club" of rich creditor

countries to find the rest. Although recognising the need for action, they say they cannot put up as much as the IMF wants.

Complicating matters further, the G7 is also split on the call by Kenneth Clarke, the Chancellor, for the Fund to sell off a small portion of its \$40bn (£26bn) gold stock to raise the money. While Britain and the US back the idea, Germany, France and Japan are opposed. Such a step would weaken the Fund's financial base and "send the wrong signal," Germany's Finance Minister, Theo Waigel, repeated this weekend.

The wrangling has dismayed relief agencies, which argue that the plight of the poorest countries has long since reached

calamity proportions. But yesterday G7 officials seemed confident the outline of a deal can be reached at the annual G7 summit in Lyons in summer, so that a final package can be approved at the Fund's annual meeting here in October.

Despite some differences over the recent strengthening of the dollar, all is relatively calm on the currency front. The Clinton administration does not want to see the US currency advance much further, for fear of weakening exports. But some European countries, anxious to boost their own foreign markets to help revive their domestic economies, would welcome a depreciation of their currencies against the dollar.

ROBERT BLOCK
Johannesburg

The South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission moves to Cape Town today for what is expected to be a second week of dramatic hearings aimed at bringing apartheid-era crimes to light.

But as the impact of last week's first harrowing testimonies and the screams of anguished witnesses begin to fade, questions are being asked whether the commission will really uncover the truth about the past and whether its hearings will really lead to reconciliation.

The body's chairman, Archbishop Desmond Tutu, has said he was extraordinarily pleased

at last week's hearings in the Eastern Cape town of East London because they showed the panel's bias towards the victims of apartheid.

"The major purpose [of the commission] is the rehabilitation of the human and civil dignities of those people who have been treated like dirt and that is largely by allowing them to tell their story," the archbishop said.

There is little doubt the testimonies of the first 30 witnesses to appear before what some pundits have called an "historical group therapy session" opened a door on the suffering, pain and brutality of South Africa's past. The testimonies were both gripping and moving. The impact of the proceed-

ings and the archbishop's tearful collapse at the end of the second day were tremendous. Officials say the commission's offices were deluged with requests from people wanting to tell their stories.

But some watchdog groups have dismissed the tears as theatricals. Paul Peirera, of the South African Institute of Race Relations, called the hearings—in which some victims named their alleged torturers and the supposed killers of their loved ones—a "farce". He said evidence of crimes should go to the courts, adding: "If this thing's about searching for truth, then it should use ways that have evolved over centuries for getting to the truth. You're not

going to get respect for the rule of law back until you start applying the law."

Alex Boraine, the commission's deputy chairman, acknowledged that his team of 60 investigators faced a tough task in cracking many apartheid crimes and urged perpetrators of abuses to tell their stories. The commission has powers to grant indemnity to wrongdoers as an inducement for them to come forward. Many former security officers have said they plan to take up the offer.

But two former security officials have brought legal action to try to block the testimony of one woman who intends to accuse them of complicity in the poisoning of her activist son.

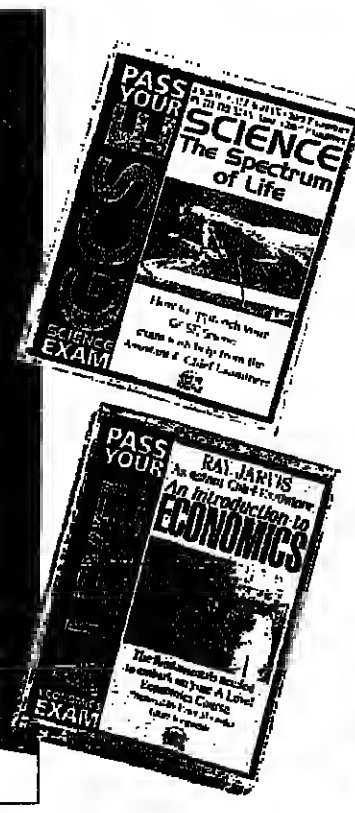
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Rooting out the abusers

We failed them as children, and we are failing them still. Over the past 25 years, hundreds of children entrusted to the care of the state have been raped and assaulted, bullied and abused by the adults appointed in loco parentis to care for them. The authorities who worked on our behalf to license and regulate these people, to recruit and train the workers if they staffed them, failed in their duty to look and listen to the cries of children who endured terrible torments.

Today, at least 10 police forces are investigating claims of abuse in children's homes. Yet even when abuse is uncovered, it is often too late for the victims. Reports are often delayed, covered up and survivors of family abuse lack the support they need to police. Worst of all, as our sister paper the *Independent* on Sunday made clear yesterday, we have not acted on the most important lessons from recent scandals.

The systematic violence against innocent children that emerges from these investigations is shocking. Many of these cases are run by the public authorities (name) in practice they are exploited by networks of paedophiles. More than 100 very young children were abused by Frank Beck in Leicestershire between 1973 and 1978. In Staffordshire's infamous "pining down" regime led to the abuse of a further 150 children between 1983 and 1989. At least 100 children abused in Chwyd, North Wales, and 60 or more in Islington, north London. Sadly these would be just the tip of the iceberg.

Leicestershire police have begun the biggest inquiry ever into child abuse interviewing 2,000 former residents.

These last two inquiries, in Chwyd and Leicestershire, must be published. We have an obligation to face up to the crimes committed against children by public servants, the chain of officials, professionals and

politicians who failed to stop the abuse must be held to account. The councillors in North Wales who tried to shield the Chwyd report from public scrutiny were wrong. As they draft a new version for publication, they must not censor significant findings.

Most important, the Government and local authorities must implement the many lessons from these reports. If a GP deliberately made a patient ill, he would be struck off the medical register. A lawyer caught using professional knowledge to defraud her clients would not be allowed to practise again.

People who look after children – especially the vulnerable and disturbed children who are placed in care – have far more power than GPs or doctors. Yet they remain largely unregulated; abusers are still able to move from one position of trust to another, leaving a trail of distraught children behind them. The Government should establish a general social services council to act as a professional and disciplinary body for care workers – similar to those in medicine and the law. There are bound to be practical difficulties in determining how far to spread the professional net. For example, should foster parents be included alongside the managers of residential homes? But these are not insurmountable obstacles.

This is an urgent task. Vulnerable members of the community, whether they be children, the elderly, or the chronically sick, all depend on the honour and professionalism of care workers. As community care expands, the Government should make sure it is able to regulate and register care workers to ensure those in care are better protected. If we fail to act now, as Allan Levy argues on the facing page, we will be guilty of a gross dereliction of duty towards some of the most vulnerable members of our society.



LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Lebanon: 'pusillanimous' reaction of politicians

Sir: As a Parliamentary visitor to Qana at the time that the shelling started nine days ago I welcome your condemnation of the utterly disproportionate Israeli response to Hizbollah's use of its inevitable result ("Israel must call off the killing", 19 April).

In their desire to see the election of Shimon Peres, the West has been reluctant to understand why Lebanon's Prime Minister Hariri will not, and at this stage, cannot silence Hizbollah. The occupation of south Lebanon is illegal under international law. Hizbollah has parliamentary representation, and their support, inevitably, thrives under military attack. The dominant Syrians together with Mr Hariri remain confident that they will be able to exercise that control once Israel has withdrawn from Lebanese territory. It is only on this basis that peace can be achieved.

As Britain voted for the original Security Council resolution it is sad to see British politicians so pusillanimous in upholding it. Moral outrage combined with excessive understanding of the Israeli position amounts to acquiescence to a deliberate attack on a UN base which was a known refuge. It is not sufficient to condemn the loss of life – for who could disagree with that? Condemnation of Israel for the reckless irresponsibility of their action in Qana, their contempt for the UN shown in the preparedness to kill UN troops and their whole Grapes of Wrath strategy would be more appropriate.

Can we ever again suggest that Government or, indeed, Parliament takes an even-handed view of Middle East issues?

JOHN GUNNELL MP
(Morley & Leeds South, Lab)
House of Commons
London SW1

Sir: In his report on Israeli military action in the Lebanon (20 April) Robert Fisk asks what

world Uri Dromi, the Israeli Government's chief spokesman, is living in.

Certainly he is in a world apart from southern Lebanon which is now bearing the brunt of the unchanging nature of Israeli military doctrine. There he could see practical demonstration of that doctrine as enunciated by David Ben-Gurion in his 1948 War Diary: "There is no question as to whether a reaction is necessary or not... What is necessary is cruel and strong reactions. We need precision in time, place and casualties. If we know the family – strike mercilessly, women and children included. Otherwise the action is inefficient. At the place of action there is no need to distinguish between guilty and innocent..."

ST JOHN ARMSTRONG
Wells, Somerset

Sir: Naomi Katz (Letters, 17 April) asks whether the British Government would stand idly by if "the IRA was bombing buses and throwing Katyusha rockets into your back yard".

I don't believe that even the most rabid Tory backwoodsman has advocated that the British government should shell large areas of West Belfast or launch air strikes on Dublin to fight the IRA.

For Ms Katz to attempt to justify the shelling of civilians by claiming that Hizbollah is "linked in purpose" with the suicide bombers of Hamas, is further to confuse the issue. The conditions for the rocket attacks have grown directly out of the Israeli occupation by proxy of southern Lebanon. Equally, the conditions for Hizbollah to develop as a military power have been created by Israel's decision to treat Lebanon as merely another arena for its conflict with the Palestinians, and its refusal to respect the rights of the Lebanese people.

MIKE SHALLCROSS
London SE22

Undeniable need for research investment

Sir: David Harrison's analysis of the crisis in university research is spot on (17 April). For many research projects the crisis will prove terminal unless the government reverses the 50 per cent cut in capital funding that it inflicted on universities in the last budget.

However, Dr Harrison's solution to the problems that he identifies unfortunately reflects the defeatist attitude that has so badly hampered the universities' ability to defend themselves against government vandalism and public indifference. Directing research funding into fewer and fewer universities (inevitably followed by the most talented staff and students) brings to mind deckchairs and the Titanic. Explicitly denying staff in the vast majority of the university system access to public funding for their research is an arbitrary denial of their intellectual creativity and a "trade constraint" in their professional activities. Is past performance really the only way to identify excellence? Where are the new ideas and the new researchers to come from?

The case for increased investment in research is undeniable. Let us say so, not try to sew patches on the policies that have done so much damage to our universities.

DR JOANNA DE GROOT
President
Association of University Teachers
London W11

Sir: David Harrison's proposals to reverse the decline in Britain's research quality by increasing the concentration of funds in a relatively few universities is nothing more than a ringing endorsement of the Matthew principle: "Unto every one that hath shall be given, and he shall have abundance, but from him that hath not shall be taken away even that which he hath."

He points out himself that research resources are already very unevenly distributed in Britain. In fact, for years they have been more concentrated on a smaller proportion of universities than in the US or Germany, our more successful research competitors. The inevitable conclusion has to be drawn that his remedy has already been applied, tested, and found wanting.

Rather than adopting the defeatist position that the only thing to do is to fight amongst themselves, British universities should be out there pursuing the public that investment in research pays – not only in national prestige from Nobel prizes – but in a better quality of life and a stronger economy.

Professor HUGH PENNINGTON
Department of Medical Microbiology
University of Aberdeen

Sir: Dr Mulvey (Letters, 19 April) of Save British Science puts the

case well for more support for the nation's science in its universities. The fact that his organisation exists says much for the state we are in.

As a practising scientist and head of a top-rated research institution in the University of London (which exists also to teach), I have personally and professionally borne the brunt of the government's unprecedented reduction in funding.

Not all research is costly, but the concentration of money into larger and larger grants for fewer scientists makes it so. Let us not accept the wisdom that big in research is better, that bigger grants are more productive, but let us understand the human side of science. It is not some activity for a few on whom the sun has shone. It is a daily function of academics and industrial scientists and it needs its foot soldiers and data gatherers as well as its visionaries and generals. We destroy not only the diversity of contributions from individual researchers at our peril we also, by starving the many of funds, destroy morale.

As a nation we have the funds to build 40 new prisons while our universities crumble. How much more can we do for our universities?

Professor A T FLORENCE
The School of Pharmacy
University of London
London WC1

A manifesto for the monarchy

RUPE Washi

Finan cluho dustri yesterday up the only. Bank relief. At held on spring. The divorce of the Duke and Duchess of York and of the Prince and Princess of Wales will clear the decks. But her sons' eight marriages are only part of her problem. The real trouble is much wider than that. Our society is being remade by some powerful forces: it is becoming more and more secular, more international and less patient. It is those changes at really threaten the monarchy by making it seem outdated, slow-moving, irrelevant.

The depth of respect for the Queen and Queen Mother will ensure that the real test for the monarchy will come soon. The real test will come with the accession.

Prince Charles has sometimes given the impression that he would rather retreat into a garden than be King, an attitude that fits the question: "Well if he's not both, why should we be?" Republicanism is not on the agenda of serious politics. Yet, but if the Royal Family does not let it sit together, it may be a different story in 20 years' time (which counts as

the short run in the monarchy business).

The monarchy's public standing will not be restored through appeals to history or folklore. The case will not be won by totting up the commercial benefits of royal-related tourism. The monarchy will only prosper if it finds a way of knitting itself into the fabric of a fast-moving, plural, sceptical society.

The Royal Family's role is not to compete with pop stars in the glamour stakes. Its main job is not constitutional. It should position itself as the prime defender of the dignified part of society by standing for decency, duty, service and self-sacrifice. The way it can best achieve that is through following the lead of Princess Anne's impressive, determined charity work. That is the model Prince Charles should follow.

The monarchy has a difficult trick to pull off. It is a self-consciously old-fashioned institution. It cannot survive without clothing itself in the past. Yet the royals have to find a way of identifying themselves with the current, the modern, without degrading the currency of royalty. The way to pull off that trick is to capitalise on the anti-statist tenor of our times by identifying with the non-state voluntary sector. In this consumerist age the other thing that people like is have spelled out to them what they are being offered: the Queen could do worse than issue a manifesto for the modern monarchy with a commitment to the voluntary sector as its centrepiece.

Post letters to Letters to the Editor, and include a daytime telephone number. (Fax: 071-293 2056; e-mail: letters@independent.co.uk) Letters may be edited for length and clarity.

BBC's jazz coverage gives me the blues



MILES KINGSTON

There was once a great Scottish clarinetist called Sandy Brown who spent a lot of his time writing to the BBC asking why their policy on jazz was so mean and ignorant. He once spent a lot of time writing persuasive pieces in the literary weekly magazine run by the BBC, the *Lit-prof*, back in the days when the BBC nised an literary weekly magazine and not a consumerist publications aimed at armchair interested in holidays, cooking and string quartets. If you ever come across a second-hand copy of Sandy Brown's posthumously collected writings, *The McJazz Manuscripts*, get it – it's a real treat for a witty and rich treat.

There is the start of one such letter to the then BBC chairman, Sir Michael Swann.

Dear Sir Michael,

Jazz Coverage of Jazz Music

I've written before, over a period of 10 years, about the abysmally small amount of time given to this art form. I found myself doing so that there is nobody responsible in the Corporation for handling the jazz – at least nobody who has any knowledge or experience of it. Such complaints as I received displayed an appalling ignorance about the subject...

Sandy Brown is, alas, dead, but the BBC is still for the most part being mean and ignorant about jazz.

ing a kind of well-drilled museum archive big band swing that not many jazz fans would go out of their way to listen to. And yet very often, when I switch on *Jazz Notes* to hear what's happening, I find that half the music is provided by the BBC Big Band.

Well, I don't want to listen to the bloody BBC Big Band. I want to listen to some jazz. I don't want someone at the BBC to shrug off its commitment to the BBC Big Band by saying, "Oh well, we'll put them into one of the jazz slots – nobody will ever complain, especially if it's on so late that nobody's listening anyway."

And not only that – I also think that the late hour is beginning to affect the mental state of those on the programme. Digby Fairweather, the main presenter, has been so far affected by the late hours that he has taken to saying "Absolutely!" whenever he means "Yes". And he was recently involved in this rather odd exchange with Campbell Burnap.

Burnap: Do you know there's an amazing statistic came up recently? – an American writer says that today 91 per cent of living Americans have no memories of the 1930s at all?

Fairweather: Gosh, that's frightening, isn't it? Don't you think so?

Burnap: Well, we don't either, but we love the music.

Fairweather: So we do!

I work it out that in order to have memories of the 1930s you'd have to be well into your sixties so what all that means, if anything, is that 91 per cent of living Americans are not yet well into their sixties, which doesn't seem too frightening to me. Nor do I think it would have seemed frightening to Digby Fairweather if he was allowed to broadcast on jazz during normal waking hours. I fear for his sanity if he is kept up past his bedtime so often.

Before I leave the subject of BBC idiocy, I also fear for the sanity of those who compile Channel 4 listings in the *Radio Times*. The other day we were promised a brief book review of a new life of Bertrand Russell, offered by Harry Carpenter. Thousands of boxing fans must have been disappointed to switch on and find Humphrey Carpenter instead. The *Radio Times* also previewed Channel 4's *The Girl Club* on Saturday, in which Reggie Nadelson investigates expensive American strip clubs. "He asks," says the *Radio Times*, "if the men may only look but not touch, what is the real attraction?"

He? HE? At the time of going to press Reggie Nadelson was a woman. Oh, well – maybe the person who does the Channel 4 listings also handles the BBC radio jazz policy.

Reading English

Sir: I can tell Trevor McDonald how to induce the young to speak and write good English. As a child I was lonely, since there were no playmates nearby and my much older siblings were at boarding school. I was deprived of television (not yet invented), radio (the parental set was not available to me) and cinema (non-existent locally), so my absorbing passion was reading the books in my nursery, books borrowed from school or grown-up books in the parental library. The result was that I automatically and painlessly learnt how to spell, write and speak grammatically and coherently.

ALICE H BRU
Henley-on-Thames

Action against child abusers

Sir: Hearty congratulations on your Saturday piece "Abusers" charter goes unchecked" (20 April). My professional association is extremely concerned about the lack of control over a small minority of professionals who exploit and abuse children as well as some adults with disabilities. It is angry about the inability to deal with these colleagues and the worsening situation created by increased recruitment from the EU and elsewhere. For more than 30 years the British Association of Social Workers and its predecessors have pressed for a government-backed social work council to check this minority of colleagues and also for an additional year's training for social workers.

When BASW takes disciplinary action against allegedly errant members, some simply resign and go on practising. Successive governments have refused to take any action. We must now give them the tools to do the job.

DAVID BRANDON
Professor in Community Care
Chair, British Association of Social Workers
Cambridge

Inflammatory use of the word genocide

Sir: I was surprised to see that Phil Reeves's piece on Médecins Sans Frontières' report on the bombing and killing of civilians by the Russian military in Chechnya ("Russia is accused of genocide in Chechnya", 19 April) had been given such an unfortunate title.

Our teams in Chechnya have witnessed what they have described as "gross and systematic violations of humanitarian law" by Russian troops, including the use of civilians as human shields, but however repulsive those practices, they do not amount, in our present knowledge, to genocide.

The accusation of genocide should never be used lightly, as it

carries exceptional legal and political responsibilities for all members of the international community. All MSF asked G7 governments to do this week was simply to hold the Russian government accountable to the standards of conduct it undertook to adhere to by its membership of the OSCE and the Council of Europe.

The use of such inflammatory language only makes the already dangerous work of our colleagues on the ground even more difficult.

ANNE-MARIE HUBY
Executive Director
Médecins Sans Frontières
UK
London EC1

Unreal image

Sir: Janet Falush maintains that we should be grateful for those who live on benefit, since the economic system we have does not share out work equitably (Letters, 12 April).

Most of the people I know who claim benefit as unemployed are also husily working in the black economy, and the remainder are engaged in criminal activities.

While this may be a reflection on the type of people I know, I suggest that the image of claimants happily doing nothing with their time is unreal, and a low-wage earner like myself is bound to resent the fact that many claimants have a total income greater than mine, by one means and another.

JOHN HEATON
Bradford

Bug-winner

Sir: I would like to award 10 out of 10 for effort to Dr David Winterbourne for his suggestion to beat the Millennium Bug (Letters, 20 April). Although his solution might work in a number of cases, there is a lot of software in use for which the original programming language code no longer exists. In these situations, it would be impossible to add his bug-fix to the software.

I, like many others, see the Millennium Bug as a godsend rather than a problem. As a freelance software engineer, the bug is likely to provide me with work for at least the next four years.

PHIL ROGERS
Dorchester, Dorset

Club members

Sir: The "club" of septuagenarian British monarchs is not quite as exclusive as your correspondent Peter Prior suggests (Letter, 20 April). He has forgotten King William IV, who died on 20 June 1837, aged 71.

DAVID T ROBERTS
Bristol

The price of music

Sir: Imagine someone applying for a job as a typist and being told that before they are seen a sum of money has to be given to the boss. Outrageous? This is the dilemma most musicians have to face – even if they have a degree and even if they are a member of the musicians' union. Pay to play – no other way.

BENEDICT HEANEY
Manchester

comment

Animal rights can damage your health

Vital medical research – and the safety of scientists – is threatened by the rise of the anti-vivisectionists

This is Laboratory Animal Awareness Week. On Saturday, at a rally in Trafalgar Square, people brought flowers to lay at the feet of giant animal silhouettes marking the numbers of animals used in British laboratories. The great majority of those who will be supporting the week or keeping a minute's silence for dead animals will no doubt be gentle animal-lovers horrified by pictures of monkeys with electrodes implanted in their brains or kittens with their eyes stitched up. But they also include supporters of more violent acts: animal rights attacks have been increasing – 622 in 1993, 934 in 1994, and likely to be up again for last year.

A few examples: Dr David White, immunologist, works on what may be the best hope for future transplants. He breeds pigs with a human gene which may produce unlimited organs for transplantation into humans without rejection. But his home has been wrecked three times, with "murderers" plastered in red paint across his sitting room walls. Then, despite every kind of security device, they put a hose through a skylight and left water pouring through for a whole weekend. Now the whereabouts of his laboratory is exceedingly secret. When he was working with Sir Roy Calne, the transplant surgeon, on the ground-breaking immuno-suppressant Cyclosporin A, a large bomb very nearly blew the hands off this distinguished surgeon. Dr White says, "A lot of the protesters are very genuine, but dreadfully mis-

informed. I get these volunteers calling me, reading out a script prepared by their organisers. Recently I had a sweet old lady reading out abusive four-letter words she was plainly very uncomfortable with. So we talked and she told me she was on drugs for her rheumatism that her GP promised her were not tested on animals. I explained to her that this was utter nonsense. All drugs have to be tested on animals for safety. People are misled by propaganda."

Professor Colin Blakemore, an outspoken defender of the use of animals, has been a frequent target. The last attack was at Christmas, when his children handled a parcel that turned out to be a bomb. Dr Vernon Coleman, the rabid anti-vivisectionist columnist in the *People*, had to be restrained by the courts from publishing Professor Blakemore's home address. Once Dr Coleman filled a double-page spread in the *Sun* with provocative lists of animal researchers, including work by Professor Terry Partridge at the Royal Postgraduate Medical School. Professor Partridge says: "It printed who we were, where we could be found, and grossly misrepresented our work on muscle disease, saying we used animals unnecessarily. We do use mice with muscular dystrophy for our research, because we have to."

Andrew Blake, 33, is in a wheelchair due to the wasting disease Friedrich's Ataxia. He founded a group called The Seriously Ill for Medical Research, backed by Stephen Hawking and others. He has nearly 400 members with



POLLY TOYNEEBE

'A lot of protesters are genuine but dreadfully misinformed'

diseases that might be cured through animal research. But he too regularly receives threats, the latest of which read, "Your support for vivisection makes you a target. You have been warned."

What effect has all this had on the progress of science? Some say it has at least tightened the rules, stopped some cavalier animal research and made scientists more gentle and careful. It has raised the cost of animal research, ensuring that scientists try every other method first. However, the Medical Research Council, Professor Blakemore, Dr White and many others say that the campaign has done great harm.

Britain has by far the most stringent laws in the world on laboratory animals. The anti-vivisectionists have forced laws on to the statute books that now make animal research so difficult

that more of it is going abroad. Development of new drugs and medical treatments is one of the few fields in which Britain excels. Yet the 1986 Animals (Scientific Procedures) Act and the 20 different sets of advice, codes of practice and guidelines that the Home Office has produced since then are now seriously impeding progress. Ten of these regulations have come in since 1994, indicating the growing influence of the animal lobbyists. These new regulations have cost universities millions of pounds – "Money that would have been far better spent on more research," says Professor Blakemore. "The regulations on temperature, air flow and living conditions are far more stringent than laws on working conditions for humans." The Research Defence Society (RDS) estimates that implementing just one 1992 Code of Practice cost £800m.

Researchers complain of the huge bureaucracy. The RDS says it now takes months to get a permit, and then requires monthly written reports to the Home Office. "We are seeing researchers turning abroad in frustration." All projects need three separate licences – one for the research itself, certifying its worth and ensuring that as few animals as possible are used. Then the lab has to be licensed, with trained keepers and a vet on call. Then each scientist doing the work needs another licence, requiring an extra compulsory training course and exam.

"It means," says Professor Blakemore, "that even the most distinguished foreign Nobel prize-winner coming to Britain to collaborate on a project is not allowed to do so because they are not licensed. You can hardly ask them to take a course and a written exam, so they don't come. Instead, we have to move the research abroad."

Professor Partridge gives an example of the problems: he was working on grafting normal muscle cells on to mice with muscular dystrophy. He wanted to take the mice to Belgium for the second part of a collaborative research programme. But Home Office rules say no lab animals can be taken abroad, so the whole experiment was done in Belgium instead. The Animal Procedures Committee is conducting a review of the 1986 Act, filling researchers with dread of yet more restriction to come.

Dr Max Headley, who uses animals for his work on painkillers, was blown up in his car in 1990 but luckily escaped injury. "One of the worst effects of anti-vivisectionism has been most eminent scientists' unwillingness to stand up and explain their work. We have a deeply anti-science culture here compared with Europe, and we need to make the case for it, but people don't dare put their heads above the parapet."

On this occasion, though, the National Anti-Vivisection Society, organisers of Laboratory Animal Awareness Week, were the ones who failed to speak up. Countless calls requesting a conversation with a spokesperson or a fax of their leaflets yielded nothing at all from them.

My daft learned friend: shut up!

Martin Mears, head of the Law Society, has dubbed women 'the enemy'. Eileen Pembridge replies

It is becoming increasingly difficult to read newspaper reports of the public utterances of Martin Mears, president of the Law Society, because it is increasingly obvious that they are given such prominence only because he is the elected leader of our profession and therefore shows us all up in a poor light. It is the latest, subtle twist to lawyer-bashing.

When I was asked to write a riposte to his "arguments" on women and the law in his speech to women lawyers at a conference on Saturday, I hesitated on the basis that, in framing a rebuttal, I was dignifying those motley pontifications with a label they did not merit. I cannot imagine for a moment that any paper would give even one column-inch to his views on the "zealotry" of women if he did not hold his current position.

It is his prominence which earns him the coverage – at our expense – and I am fed up with the sight of chorling journalists barely able to contain their glee at having such copy to play with at otherwise serious and worthy gatherings. It is not, after all, the tenets of the Flat Earth Society that call for coverage – it is the discovery that the editor of the *National Geographic* is a card-carrying member of it.

Thus it is with us. Pity the poor solicitor – underpaid and undervalued as a conveyancer, ground down and abused for long unpaid hours on legal aid work – and now a clown for a leader, one who holds out forcefully that there is no discrimination against women, no prejudice, no glass ceiling, no sexual harassment, no problem – save our own Machiavellian perceptions.

Over the past year or so several surveys have highlighted women's frustration, fear, or ire, at being held back, channelled into traditionally female fields of work, denied partnerships, at being sexually harassed or demeaned, at facing the old choice of being a "lad" (down the pub or up the club) or opting out. Women with children usually come off worst.

Mears denies any of this. He points to the fact that today half of those solicitors under 30 are women and revels at dismissing the figures showing them going so far and so further. He says that women should be at home tending their families, not "slopping their way to the top" and he plays on male fears of maternity leave and unjust accusations of sexual harassment. He moves on to lambast what he calls the whole dis-

crimination industry. The logic is flawed but the rhetoric gets him the headlines. The dilemma then is whether to ignore him or take him on.

Never mind that it is our profession's fault that he got to be our leader – it seems that many were so keen for a change at election time that they forgot to look at what change was going to produce.

Martin Mears loves every minute of it. What better way to spend a Saturday morning if you do not like women (as peers and colleagues, you understand) than to be given a platform to taunt them, wind them up, insult them (knowing the press will lap it up), to shame us in front of the Bar,

The women were philosophical: most shrugged and simply said 'weird'

bounce around being unrepentant and revel in the *enfant terrible* role while annoying so many women lawyers at one go.

One is inevitably left wondering at the personality that holds these views in the face of the evidence. One ponders how such highly personal attitudes towards women (which I see mirrored in his dealings with the Society) could come to be elevated to a credo or reported as news.

On Saturday, he dubbed all 400 of us "the enemy". The women attending were generally philosophical – we are accustomed, after all, to making allowances for the male megalomania, the fragile egos, the embittered, the patronising and the arrogant. Most shrugged and simply said "weird", and perhaps were glad to be reminded why they felt the need to be at the conference in the first place.

I have no hope that Martin Mears will ever change. This time it fell to another man, the leader of the Bar, to shrug off Mears's constant taunts of "political correctness" and tell him he was wrong. I hope that come the next election time, Mears will reap the whirlwind of his daft and offensive views on women and that the bulk of our profession will tell him that the joke's over.

The writer is a council member of the Law Society and stood against Martin Mears for the presidency of the Law Society in 1995.

Our dereliction of duty

Child abuser Frank Beck said it all in 1991: children in care are still at risk. By Allan Levy QC

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child carries enormous authority because it has been ratified by more than 180 countries, including Britain. It binds the Government to take all appropriate measures to protect children from abuse in all its forms, particularly sexual abuse. One area in which the Government is plainly failing to act effectively is in respect of some of Britain's most vulnerable and disturbed children in residential care homes.

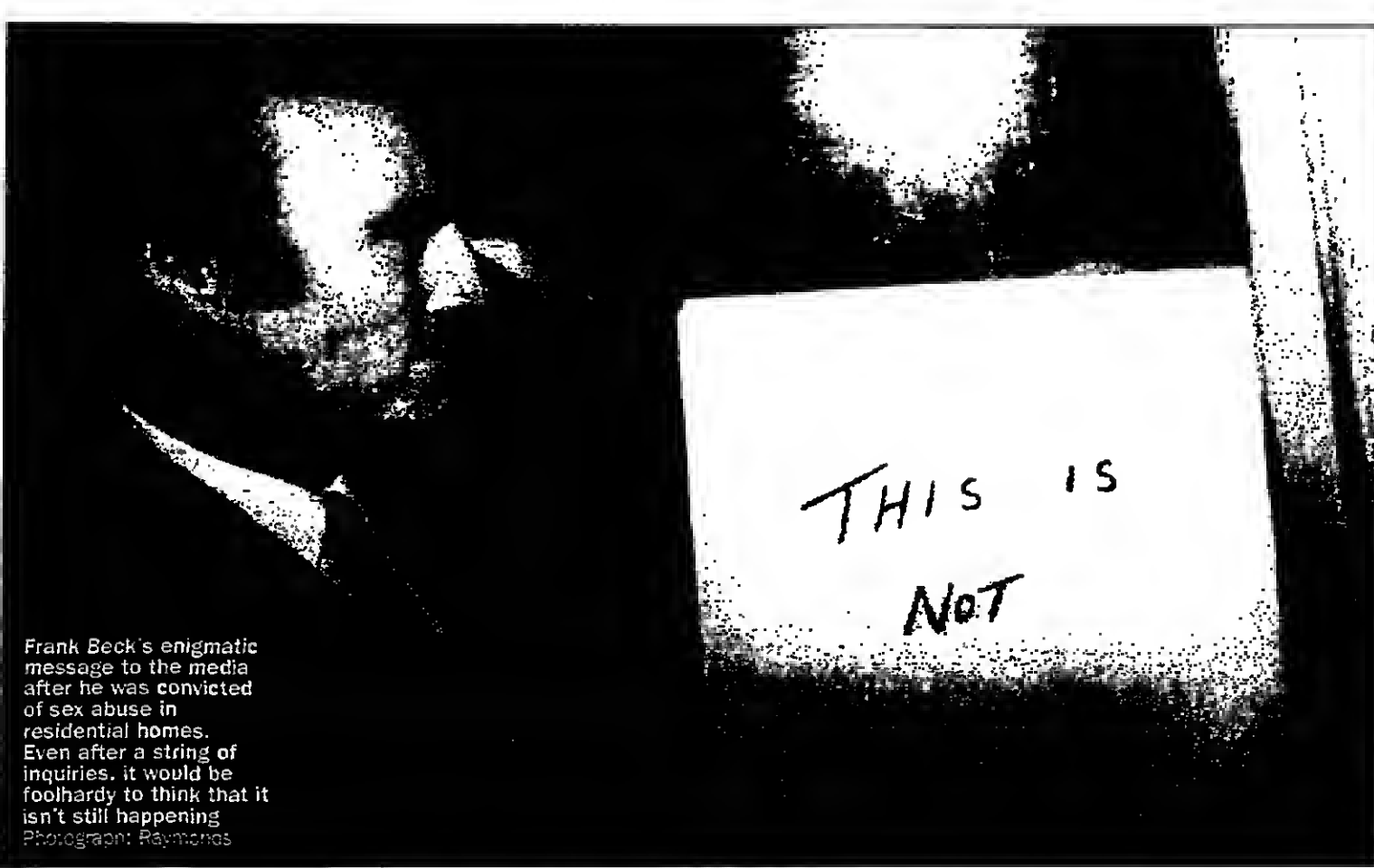
Scandal after scandal has surfaced since the pioneering "pin-down" inquiry in Staffordshire five years ago. Recommendations have been made, committees and support groups set up, and much said by politicians. The reality, however, is that today a child in residential care may well be a child in danger.

The Staffordshire Inquiry in 1990 put a searchlight for the first time on children's homes. The uncovering of an unlawful regime of restraint, involving isolation, humiliation and confrontation in so-called "pin-down" rooms, received huge media coverage. A wide range of recommendations were made, covering recruitment, training and supervision of staff, conditions in the homes, inspections, complaints procedures, methods of restraint, protection from sex offenders and standards of child care.

These were considered to be issues of national importance, and the protection of children from abusers was highlighted. The report produced national shock waves and triggered an upsurge of interest in and concern about the whole field of residential child care. Local authorities were instructed to check their homes for similar problems and to report to the Secretary of State for Health within one month.

At the request of the Government, Sir William Utting, then Chief Inspector of the Social Services Inspectorate, produced urgently a review of residential child care. He concluded in August 1991 that it was an "indispensable service", and that the homes needed to be managed, inspected and monitored carefully and staffed with professionally qualified personnel. He noted that one of the major problems was that the residential care of children was commonly regarded "as an unimportant, residual activity", whereas the reality was very different. He also pointed out that 70 per cent of the staff employed in homes lacked a relevant qualification.

Following the Utting report, the Children's Homes Regulations 1991 were brought in, an expert group was set up to examine appropriate training, and the Home report considered residential staff. Howe recommended major improvements in management, including a requirement that external managers should be experienced or trained in residential care. The topics



Frank Beck's enigmatic message to the media after he was convicted of sex abuse in residential homes. Even after a string of inquiries, it would be foolhardy to think that it isn't still happening. Photograph: Raymondes

of supervision and training, support of staff under stress and better career opportunities were again considered.

Further abuse that came to light in 1992 and 1993 in Wales (Ty Mawr), Sheffield and Leicestershire deepened the concern about children in residential care and reinforced the urgent need for the recommendations already made to be implemented. After the Utting report, the then minister for health, Virginia Bottomley, said that the Government accepted the thrust of all the recommendations and "would be taking action forward urgently to make the best use of available resources".

The Leicestershire inquiry, which covered sexual abuse of children by Frank Beck between 1973 and 1986, went over by now familiar ground, including failures regarding recruitment of staff, complaints and investigation procedures. The report noted that "it would not be wise for anyone to approach this report on the basis that if all happened a long time ago and that nothing like it could ever happen again". The Leicester inquiry led to the Warner Commission considering in particular selection and recruitment methods and criteria for staff working in children's homes.

The Warner report expressed concern that "there have been so many

inquiries whose findings seem to have gone largely unheeded by the service as a whole". That report noted that there were far too many examples of poor management and that it was essential that management, staffing levels, training and support for staff were improved. The physical condition of many homes needed urgent attention and the status of children's homes and their staff had to be raised. In response, the Government set up the

Despite all the expert attention, we appear to be no nearer to solving the problem

Support Force for Children's Residential Care, which was to last two years and offer advice to individual authorities on the relevant issues.

Yet despite all the expert attention these scandals have received, we appear to be no nearer to providing an effective solution to the problem. This amounts to a dereliction of duty to children in public care. Further scandals have surfaced in Northumbria, Islington, Cheshire and par-

ticularly North Wales. Private children's homes have also come under the spotlight, and last year one social services director complained about the Government's policy of deregulation, which allows private homes to operate with a minimum of outside supervision.

One of the children who suffered under the pin-down regime said that she was not frightened when she ran away from a particular residential home in Staffordshire because wherever she went could only be better than where she had come from. It would be foolhardy to think that abuse is not happening now in children's homes and that it will not occur in the future.

It is clear that there is a failure of leadership, both on a national and a local level. The Government in particular must provide a practical lead in dealing with a national problem requiring oversight, co-ordination and action. The findings and recommendations of numerous inquiries have gone largely unheeded.

The ethos of deregulation and the placing of responsibility locally will not do. The running down of the social services inspectorate, which has a vital role to play, is unacceptable. Recommendations repeatedly made over the years for an effective register of

individuals convicted of relevant offences must actually be heeded.

A general social services council is obviously necessary in order to set and monitor standards for care workers. Improved training, better systems of supervision and inspection and the registration of homes are other vital matters.

Overall, children merit a specific individual who will work for change and for their protection. Other countries have either a minister for children, for example Ireland, or a children's rights commissioner, as in New Zealand and Sweden.

Only, for instance, if effective recruitment methods are in place will abusers be deterred from insinuating themselves into homes. A company set up recently offering skilled vetting procedures has gone out of business because its services were not taken up. If abuse does occur, there must be proper complaints procedures and effective action.

Residential care is recognised as an important resource for our society. But it must now be properly resourced, if it is to provide a safe haven for children. We owe nothing less than this to some of our most vulnerable citizens.

The writer chaired the Staffordshire "pin-down" inquiry in 1990-91.

Docklands needs marathon effort

ANOTHER VIEW

Stephen Molyneux

school hall had been blown apart.

All this will probably cost about £1m. Yet the Government has so far failed to say what financial help will be available. When I showed John Gummer, the Environment Secretary, around the damaged estate, he told me to apply to the little-known Bellwin Fund. Yet, to date, civil servants haven't decided whether we

are entitled to apply, and have failed to produce an application form.

The main problem would seem to be that applicants are expected to have taken out insurance against terrorist attacks. Yet this had become prohibitively expensive for Tower Hamlets, given its large number of properties and an increase in premiums that followed the earlier, unsuccessful attempt to blow up the Canary Wharf tower.

So, much as everyone on the Isle of Dogs enjoyed yesterday's race, local people kept asking me: "If they can do all this with the Marathon, why can't something be done to help us?"

When a tragedy like this occurs in America, the President declares a state of emergency. In Northern Ireland, the Government coughs up. Yet here in mainland Britain, local councils and voluntary groups are expected to pick up the pieces and grovel to civil servants, who behave as though they wish they would go away.

The Government must revise the entry criteria that is barring families and local authorities from immediate financial assistance. We need a properly co-ordinated national response to disasters like the Docklands bombing to be up and running before the next London marathon gets under way.

The writer is a Labour councillor for Millwall ward on the Isle of Dogs.

As yesterday's London Marathon wound its way down the newly reopened Marshwall road, runners and onlookers had a chance to see the effects of the Docklands blast 10 weeks ago. They must have been impressed by progress. The authorities have worked hard to make offices safe.

But what about the 550 families whose homes were devastated? From the route, which looped past the Barkantine estate, everything seemed fine, apart from a banner, draped from one tower block, proclaiming "Help the Barkantine". In reality, many victims still lack the support they need. Families that lost homes and possessions and sought grants have been turned down by the Department of Social Security. Those still living in Lantern

House, the most badly damaged block, have yet to learn whether the Government will provide any new money.

British Telecom has been unsympathetic. I wrote to Sir Iain Vallance, BT's chairman, about the company's decision to impose reconnection fees after the blast. His office replied: "His heart goes out to the local community". But it declined to waive the charges.

Tower Hamlets council has done its best. Staff collected three tons of broken glass and replaced more than a thousand windows and doors. Our teachers got the local primary and nursery school reopened three days after the

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obituaries / gazette

Sir Raymond Rickett

Raymond Rickett was driven by a vision of an educational system that would encourage people from all backgrounds and all walks of life to participate.

After a career which led from a lectureship in Chemistry at Liverpool College of Technology to vice-provostship of City of London Polytechnic, he became Director of Middlesex Polytechnic at its inception in 1972 and remained there until his retirement in 1991.

He was a great champion of the polytechnics (created in 1967 largely out of the old technical colleges), but believed strongly that the binary system of universities and polytechnics was divisive; he campaigned strongly for its end, which happened in 1992, when polytechnics were given university status.

Rickett had no tradition of family involvement in higher education; an ex-serviceman's grant took him after National Service in the Navy to Medway Technical College in 1953. It was there and at Illinois Institute of Technology, where he took his PhD in Physical Chemistry,

that he laid the foundations of his vision.

He then held positions at Plymouth College of Technology, West Ham College of Technology, Wolverhampton College of Technology, and Sir John Cass College, which became City of London Polytechnic. At Middlesex, in the face of some traditional academic reluctance, he successfully promoted the educational ideas he had developed. These included modular degrees and credit accumulation (being able to study several subjects in one degree for which credits are accumulated and which are transferable between comparable institutions), giving access to a wider range of the community (through part-time degrees etc) and founding links across international boundaries with joint European degrees.

From the beginning of his directorship, Rickett played a large role in raising public awareness of the work going on in the polytechnics, through his many committees, and in advocating that polytechnics should be allowed to award their own degrees. This was achieved

in 1992; before that the Council for National Academic Awards (CNAA) awarded all polytechnic degrees.

Externally, Rickett made monumental efforts to gain recognition for the work of the new polytechnics as a whole and Middlesex in particular. He sat on all the major external committees: the Committee of Polytechnic Directors, of which he was twice chairman, the UK UNESCO Educational Advisory Committee, the Committee for International Co-operation in Higher Education, the UK Erasmus Student Grants Council, the British Council and the CNAA, of which he was chairman until his demise. Only gradually did the sounds of these battles filter through to the staff at Middlesex who were managing changes and fulfilling their continuing educational roles.

Internally, Rickett sowed the seeds of his ideas, encouraged staff to address them and develop means to implement them. His was not an insinuating style, but one of direct forceful challenge. We all as



Rickett: polytechnic champion

staff had to consider whether our ideas and ways were comfortably fixed because of habit or whether they were still valid part of the living dynamic of education.

Where Rickett saw innovation, excellence and care he publicly and privately acknowledged it. He took an acute interest in the work of the schools of study, and frequently surprised the staff of the Faculty of Art and Design by his spontaneous perception of quality – not always apparent in

the medley of degrees shows. He asked questions, such as what the future of education should be – even sending individual members of staff off for days to consider the subject – and eventually suggested answers. He relished debate, offended someone, inspired often. Whatever emotional response one had there was never any denying Rickett's massive grasp of his subject.

In the Seventies and Eighties, the fact that the level of work in polytechnics was largely equivalent to that in universities was not widely known, either abroad – as those of us commissioned to make contacts in foreign institutions discovered – or, more disturbingly, among a considerable percentage of British Members of Parliament, as a survey showed.

Rickett fought for equal funding for equal levels of work and early on declared his determination to "get rid of the binary divide". This was a cause close to the heart of my father, Lord Robbins, chairman of the Committee on Higher Education in 1961-63, whose report

was known as the Robbins Report. The creation of a binary system had gone radically against the majority recommendations of the committee, in which he was a fervent believer. He and Rickett realised the deleterious effect on the careers of young people of a system that encouraged ignorant, snobbish distinctions to be drawn without any meaningful differences existing. They discussed the problem and its implications on a number of occasions.

On retirement, Rickett saw the fruits of his endeavours in this sphere fulfilled. Middlesex Polytechnic became Middlesex University. Internally, its original constituent colleges of Hornsey, Enfield and Hendon (on many different sites) had grown and developed.

His interests spread beyond the institution and its work. He keenly followed the fortunes of Kent cricket, and loved to play himself. He played golf to a modest standard, but with a great degree of essential sportsmanship. His involvement with the Yehudi Menuhin Live Mu-

sic Now scheme was conducted with the same enthusiasm and concern that he devoted to all the activities he undertook.

When he retired from Middlesex he became Chairman of the newly formed Mid-Kent Health Care Trust. Here, in meetings and discussions, he set about making the connections he felt would best develop the involvement of all staff in the new situation and acknowledge their importance.

His wife, Naomi, and their three children acted as the firm base which is so necessary as a recreation from and springboard for such an active public involvement, and provided a space for the conception and growth of ideas which his huge, lively outside life thrived on. Their home, The Barn, in Mollish, Kent, bought relatively recently, was a marvellous theatre for thought with its high space and centuries-old structure.

Raymond Rickett was unpretentious and unpretentious. He enjoyed the ordinary things in life – a trip to Whitstable where he had grown up, his boyhood haunts, his golf club, his

favourite sea-bathing spot. He was a warm, courteous person with a formidable presence and an awesome energy, who devoted his life to helping people make the most of themselves.

The memory of his unquenchable, "indestructible" energy and involvement will remain with all who knew him. His heart was always the dominant force of his understanding.

Richard Robbins

Raymond Midway Wilson Rickett, educationist, born London 17 March 1927; Lecturer, Liverpool College of Technology 1960-62; Senior Lecturer/Principal Lecturer, West Ham College of Technology 1962-64; Head of Department, Wolverhampton College of Technology 1965-66; Vice-Principal, Sir John Cass College 1967-69; Vice-Provost, City of London Polytechnic 1969-72; Director, Middlesex Polytechnic 1972-91; CBE 1984; Ki 1990; Chairman, Mid-Kent Health Care Trust 1992-95; married 1958 Naomi Nishida (one son, two daughters); died London 6 April 1996.

Lucille Bremer

A red-headed beauty and distinguished dancer, Lucille Bremer partnered Fred Astaire in three of his finest routines, and for this reason will always be remembered fondly by lovers of the film musical, but her brief career in Hollywood is proof that stars are indeed born, not made. Bremer had the weight of the highest studio in Hollywood behind her and was mistress to one of its most powerful producers but when she was not dancing her personality had a remote, aloof quality that did not endear her to audiences.

Born in Amsterdam, New York, she started dancing lessons when seven years old and at 12 danced with the Philadelphia Opera Company. She made her New York debut as a Rockette in the famed chorus line at Radio City Music Hall, then played in night-clubs and Broadway shows, including in the chorus of *Panama Hattie* (1940) and as replacement ingenue in *Lady in the Dark* (1941). She was appearing at the Versailles night-club when she was spotted by the producer Arthur Freed. "The moment I saw her," said Freed later, "I realised she had the elegance of Marilyn Miller. I took her to MGM and she did a scene from *Dark Victory* for her test. After seeing only a minute and a half of it, Louis B. Mayer, head of the studio, said, 'She's going to be very, very big.'"

Bremer was first given extensive training by the studio's dramatic coach, Lillian Burns, then cast in the prime role of

Judy Garland's older sister in *Meet Me in St Louis* (1944). As the prim, socially conscious Rose, whose hope for a long-distance proposal by telephone forms the basis of the film's first episode, Bremer was a perfect foil for Garland, admonishing her for being too forward with boys lest the bloom wear off, to which Garland dryly replies, "Personally, I think I have too much bloom."

Bremer then partnered Astaire in *Ziegfeld Follies* (started in 1944 but released in 1946), performing with him two magnificent numbers which are today as moving and exhilarating as ever. Both are stories in dance, an extension of the form Astaire had pioneered with Ginger Rogers when they performed "Let's Face the Music and Dance" in *Follow the Fleet*. In the first, Astaire is a gentleman thief who crashes a society party only to fall in love with his victim. After singing to her on a starlit terrace, he takes her in his arms and they glide into a languorous *pas de deux* to the sweeping strains of the gorgeous "This Heart of Mine" (by Harry Warren and Arthur Freed), twirling effortlessly as the floor revolves beneath them.

The second number, built around Douglas Furber and Philip Braham's "Limehouse Blues", is a 13-minute *tour de force*, its centrepiece a Chinese fantasy dream by a young man as he lies dying, the innocent victim of a shooting in Limehouse, east London. In an exotic set of orange, red and yel-

low (conceived by Irene Sharaff), Astaire and Bremer perform an intricate dance involving syncope leaps, twirls and precise manipulation of fans which open, close and criss-cross as the couple execute Robert Alton's stunning choreography. This dance – one of the film musical's crowning glories – demonstrated Bremer's skill, precision and athleticism.

MGM then decided to star her alongside Astaire in Vincente Minnelli's *Yolanda and the Thief* (1945), but its slight, whimsical story of a confidence trickster who pretends to be the guardian angel of an ingenious heiress needed more charm and wit than either Bremer or the script were able to provide, and its score (by Warren and Freed) was weak. A Dalí-influenced Surrealist plot was imaginative, though perceived by many as pretentious, but the one good song, "Coffee Time", a surging jazz riff, inspired the third of the great Astaire-Bremer duets.

Set in a South American plaza, its floor patterned in undulating black and white, the number starts with carnival crowds dancing gaily and clapping hands to the insistent rhythms, who gradually part to leave the way clear for the star pair, who clap, kick, twirl and embrace with escalating *clan* in variations of jive. It is a totally joyous sequence in the otherwise tepid film, which proved a box-office disaster.

Bremer was one of 13 stars top-billed in the Jerome Kern

biography *Till the Clouds Roll By* (1946), playing the fictitious role of a spoiled girl (daughter of Kern's best friend) who expects a short cut to fame. Bremer's exuberant dance duet with Van Johnson, "I Won't Dance", was a highlight of the film, but she was unable to counteract her role's basic lack of sympathy. Both Freed and Mayer had now lost interest in her, and after a role in one of the studio's "Dr Gillespie" films, *Dark Delusions* (1947), as a young girl given to bouts of insanity, she was dropped.

Years later, Judy Garland was asked what happened to Bremer. "The studio let her go," she replied, then after a pause added, "and no one cared." In fact Bremer made three more films, including Edgar G. Ulmer's *Ruthless* (1948), an impressive account of the rise and fall of a scoundrel (Zachary Scott) in which Bremer, wife of Sidney Greenstreet but lusty for Scott, made telling use of her resemblance to Bette Davis, indicating that she might have been able to carve a career as second-lead villainess. She preferred to retire completely from the screen, marrying the son of a former president of Mexico and eventually settling in California, where she raised five daughters and ran a shop selling children's clothes.

Tom Vallance

Lucille Bremer, actress, dancer, born Amsterdam, New York 21 February 1923; married (five daughters); died 16 April 1996.



'She's going to be very, very big': Bremer in 1944

Piet Hein

Piet Hein did not exactly have an ordinary Danish name – his forebears on his father's side were in fact Dutch – and nor could it be said of him that he was exactly an ordinary Dane: he is talked of as a poet and inventor, something of a philosopher, something of an artist – a pupil of the Swedish cartoonist Albert Engström on the one hand and of the Danish atomic physicist Niels Bohr on the other.

The paradox inherent in this lies perhaps at the heart of his most famous creations, the brief aphoristic poems known in English as *Grooks* and the so-called "super ellipses" in which Hein combined the ellipse and the oval. Danish he certainly was, but he combined his Danishness with a cosmopolitan outlook, reflected in the many years he spent abroad, some six or seven of them in Britain.

Piet Hein was born in 1905 into an affluent middle-class family. His father, Hjalmar Hein, was a civil engineer, his mother, Estrid, an eye specialist. In the small world of Danish intellectual and cultural life it is perhaps no surprise to discover that his mother was a cousin of Karen Blixen's mother. After attending the famous Metropolitanskole, where mathematics was his principal subject, Piet Hein went to study art at the Stockholm Royal Swedish School of Fine Arts, breaking off and returning to Copenhagen three years later in order to study philosophy and theoretical physics, though once more without taking a final examination.

He then embarked on a series of experiments and inventions in fields ranging from light to Oriental games, and from creations in metalwork, china and glass, including a sophisticated lock mechanism. To the super ellipse that was used in the design of tables and chairs, and which ultimately came to form the basis for the new Sergels Square in Stockholm in the 1960s, when Hein was employed there as a town planning consultant. He – and his ideas – were widely discussed in scientific journals.

It was, however, for his poems that he became best known. His *Grooks*, written under the pseudonym Kumbel Kumbell (an erudite and complicated pun on his own name), began to appear in the newspaper *Politiken* in 1940 soon after the beginning of the German occupation, and before long they achieved a national following. Witty, aphoristic,

subtle, sometimes humorous, sometimes biting, they could be used in typical Danish resistance fashion to comment on the occupation, but they went further than this in their general comments on life, their play on words, their fondness for the stinging in the tail, their sheer inventiveness.

Consequently, they continued to be written long after the occupation and became one of the best known and best loved of all Danish literary products for many years, certainly until the rather more drab literary creed of the 1970s took over. Piet Hein is said to have written some 10,000 in all, and some of them have achieved proverbial status. Many of them, each illustrated by Hein himself, were collected and published in book form, and there are six volumes of English translations, also splendidly done by the author.

In an earlier day, such poems would inevitably have been didactic moralisings, but Piet Hein avoided all such in his search for humanity and tolerance. The best advice he could give, he said, was not to give advice. If he modelled himself on anyone, it must surely have been the late 18th-century humorist Johan Herman Wessel, and, significantly enough, Hein wrote the prologue for a Royal Theatre production celebrating Wessel in 1942. The literary ancestry was a good one: Wessel is still read today.

As a result both of his scientific work and his commitment to the liberal ideas envisaged in movements such as the World Movement for World Federal Government, Open Door International and the PEN Club, to name but a few, Piet Hein wrote a series of theoretical and philosophical works. He received a host of distinctions and awards, including honorary doctorates in Yale and Odense. It is, however, as the creator of the super ellipse and the *Grooks* that he is most likely to be remembered by a general public that approved both of his ideas and his manner of expressing them.

Perhaps the best summary of these is the *Grook* he wrote and placed in the middle of a drawing of the super ellipse:

There is one art, no more, no less: to do all things with artlessness.

W. Glyn Jones

Piet Hein, inventor and poet, born Copenhagen 16 December 1905; died Middelfart 17 April 1996.

Christopher Johnson

Christopher Johnson, editor and musician, died on Easter Day. He came from Rushmere St Andrew near Ipswich. He never lost his marked accent and his slow speech pattern belied the quickness of his mind.

He graduated from Sussex University in 1966, with a degree in English. He is still remembered there as a brilliantly unconventional student and as guitarist with the university rock group. Even then, he was something of a polymath. He wrote poetry, prose, letters, journals. He drew. He wrote songs – mostly tunes with complicated three-part guitar accompaniments – and played music endlessly. He combined extreme personal and artistic fastidiousness with a dedicated Bohemian life style.

Johnson's working life was also Bohemian sometimes and bewilderingly conventional at others. He worked as a session guitarist in London in the late 1960s and as a busker in Paris in the mid-1970s. Early on he worked as a lift-operator at Liberty, in Regent Street, London, but later held down long-term jobs with the DHSS and with a housing trust.

It was only in middle age, working for Scoob Books, an independent London publishing house concentrating on occult

and literary texts, that the two sides of Johnson's nature came together successfully. As a bookshop manager (at Scoob's shop off Southampton Row), occult book expert and editor, first of reprints and then of new books, he showed authority, precision and passion. He was particularly committed to the development of a literary list representing the power of imagination and the visionary moment. He kept in print the writing of the poets Kathleen Raine, David Gascoyne and Michael Hamburger, while he promoted the new work of Jeremy Reed and Peter Abbs.

The occult had been one of his lasting interests. At one point, in the early Seventies, he



Johnson: precision and passion

was heavily involved with the Druids. All forms of religion and magic seemed to fascinate him as strategies for developing the inner life and keeping back the reign of pragmatism.

At the end of his life, overworked and ill, he left Scoob and returned to the Anglican Church, where he had friends and for which he had been writing organ music. Last Christmas, just before his illness was diagnosed as cancer, he wrote and taped 12 songs for the session guitarist Mo Foster described as "a cross between Jacques Brel and Ray Davies". It was an extension of his guitar work in the Sixties.

It was a puzzle to his friends that Johnson, the gentlest of men and notably constant in his friendships, should have such a turbulent private life. He never really settled down. At the end he was living alone in a small book-filled flat in Bloomsbury. He is mourned by a wide circle of friends, many of whom – given that Chris Johnson always compartmentalised a complicated life – are just now starting to know of each other.

Glyn Jones

Christopher Reginald Johnson, editor and musician; born Ipswich 13 June 1944; died London 7 April 1996.

Arnold Neustadter

Arnold Neustadter was the inventor of the Rolodex and devoted most of his life to the quest for order in the office and home. His invention, a cylindrical rotating card file, was designed in 1950 as a tool to speed the work of the secretary and later became the Establishment's wheel of power and a lasting totem to the art of social and business mobility.

A collector of antique paperweights who married his secretary, Neustadter was not the greatest user of his machine: he didn't care to use the telephone and always came to the point. Fittingly, he kept a clean desk.

He was "the most organised man I ever knew," his son-in-law David Revasch said. "His life was so organised it was like his own invention. Whenever anyone put something on his desk that didn't belong there, he'd move it. He could have patented his own life."

Neustadter was born in Brooklyn in 1911 and attended New York University before joining his father's box-manufacturing business in 1931.

He soon struck out on his own and established his company Zephyr American Corporation with a series of moderately successful inventions.

The first was the Autodex, a

spring-mounted personal phone directory that popped up at a given letter of the alphabet. Then came the Swivodex, a spill-proof inkwell, and the Clipodex, which could be clipped to the knee to help secretaries and stenographers to take dictation.

In 1950 he launched the Rolodex. At first it received a lukewarm reception. "I knew I had a good idea, but people were sceptical at first," he said in 1988, "and we had trouble getting stationery stores to buy it."

Neustadter toured sales shows and office supplies stores with a promotional gambit to entice orders for the \$7.95 machine – he would offer \$50 to anyone who could locate a card faster than one of his company reps.

The machine quickly became a staple in offices throughout the country, capturing 90 per cent of the market and transcending its original clerical purpose to become a symbol of success for businessmen, politicians and socialites who came to be described in terms of their hulking Rolodexes.

"Hollywood put it in films and television, then everyone believed the bigger the Rolodex, the bigger the man," said Revasch.

Neustadter's invention has survived social and technological change. Designed for the hierarchical Fifties, it proved an essential tool in the Eighties era of networking and in this decade the computer has dented but not destroyed its usefulness. In recent years the number of different models has declined and some have become computerised. The largest in the range, the 6,000-card, three-wheel Torque-A-Matic, has been discontinued altogether.

He ran Zephyr American until 1970, when he sold the company at a vast profit. He retained the European rights to Rolodex and spent seven years in London managing the business before retiring to Palm Beach, Florida, where his interests turned to philanthropy and art. He amassed a collection of modern work that included Chagall, Picasso and Henry Moore and he supported Israeli and Jewish causes, making contributions to the Jewish Anti-Defamation League and the Israel Museum.

Edward Helmore

Arnold Neustadter, businessman and inventor; born Brooklyn 1911; married (one son, two daughters); died New York 17 April 1996.

BIRTHS

CURRIE: On 3 April 1996, to Harriet and Andrew, a daughter, Daisy Lola Anzelm, sister to Amber Lola. With thanks to maternity staff at St John and St Elizabeth.

DEATHS

CUSHING: Professor George Frederick A. St Christopher's Hospice on 12 April 1996, aged 72. Emeritus Professor of Hungarian, London University. Service of Thanksgiving at the Methodist Church, Prince Imperial Road, Chislehurst, on Thursday 25 April, at 3.15pm. Family flowers only, but donations, if desired, to St Christopher's Hospice, Sydenham, or Chislehurst Methodist Church.

PAINE: Robert. Architect. Died quietly at Fordwich, on 18 April 1996. Cremation on 25 April, at one o'clock, at Barham Crematorium.

Births, Marriages & Deaths

Announcements for Births, MARRIAGES & DEATHS (Births, Adoptions, Marriages, Deaths, Memorial services, Wedding anniversaries, In Memoriam) should be sent in writing to the Gazette Editor, The Independent, 1 Canada Square, Canary Wharf, London E14 5LJ, telephoned on 0171-293 2011 or faxed on 0171-293 2010, and are charged at £6.50 a line (VAT extra). OTHER Gazette announcements must be submitted in writing (or faxed) and are charged at £10 a line, VAT extra. They should be accompanied by a day-time telephone number.

Birthdays

Mr Leo Abse, former MP 79; Mr Eddie Albert, actor, 88; Sir Michael Aiyah, mathematician, 67; Sir Christopher Ball, linguist, and former Warden, Keeble College, Oxford, 61; Mr Lewis Biggs, Curator, Tate Gallery, Liverpool, 44; Mr Alan Bond, yachtsman and businessman, 58; Mr Peter Bowring, former chairman, C.T. Puzze, 73; Mr Glen Campbell, country singer, 58; Mr Alan Dukes, former leader of the Fine Gael party in Ireland, 51; Dr Eric Feolty, former Professor of Harcourt, Royal Academy of Music, 90; Mr Peter Frampton, rock musi-

cian, 46; Sir William Gage, High Court judge, 58; Mr Lloyd Horton, painter, 36; Mr Robin Hurton, merchant banker, 63; Mr Ronald Hynd, choreographer, 65; Mr Robert Key MP, 51; Mr Archy Kirkwood MP, 50; Mr Nico Ladenis, restaurateur, 62; Dr Geoffrey Marshall, Provost, Queen's College, Oxford, 67; Lord Menuhin, violinist, 80; Mr Jack Nicholson, actor, 59; The Earl of Oxford and Asquith, former Governor of the Seychelles, 80; Miss Margaret Pereira, forensic scientist, 68; Sir Edward Ratford, former ambassador to Norway, 62; Mr R.J. Ritchie, former tennis player, 86; Professor Sir Eric Scowen, physician, 86; Mr Charles Sisco, author and poet, 82; Mr David Summerville, Head Master, Westminster School, 59; Sir Robert Wade-Cory, executive director and vice-chairman, BZW, 67.

Anniversaries

Births: Isabella, Queen of Castile and Leon, 1451; Giuseppe Torricelli, composer, 1658; Henry Fielding, novelist, 1707; Immanuel Kant, philosopher, 1724; James Graham, poet, 1765; Madame de Staël (Anne-Louise-Germaine Necker, Baronne de Staël-Holstein), writer, 1766; José de Madrazo y Kaniz, painter, 1781; Wilfred Ellington Bendall, composer, 1850; Phil (Philip William) May, caricaturist, 1864; Lenin (Vladimir Ilich Ulyanov), Communist leader, (Old Style 10 April) 1870; Ellen Anderson Ghoslen Glasgow, novelist, 1874; Sergei Sergeyevich Prokofiev, composer, 1891; Kathleen Mary Ferrer, contralto, 1912; Julius Robert Oppenheimer, physicist, 1904; Sir Sidney Nolan, painter, 1917. Deaths: John Tradesant, gardener, 1662;

James Hargreaves, inventor of the spinning jenny, 1778; Thomas Rowlandson, cartoonist, 1827; Richard Trevithick, steam engineer, 1833; Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman, statesman, 1908; John Pussmore Edwards, newspaper proprietor and philanthropist, 1911; Frederick Henry Royce, motor-car pioneer, 1933; Basil Dean, actor, manager and playwright, 1978; Aysel Easton Adams, photographer, 1984; Richard Milhous Nixon, 37th US president, 1994. On this day: Pedro Alvarez de Cabral reached Brazil and claimed it for Portugal, 1500; the Royal Society was incorporated, 1662; Napoleon defeated the Piedmontese at the Battle of Mondovi, 1796; the Baltic Exchange, London, was founded (as the Baltic Club), 1823; St Helena became a Crown Colony, 1834; the packet ship *Sphinx* crossed the At-

lantic for the first time under continuous steam power, the voyage taking 16 days, 10 hours, 1833; the second Battle of Ypres began, when the poison gas was used for the first time by Germany, 1915; the New York World's Fair opened, 1964; the army in Greece effected a coup, and martial law was declared, 1967; Robin Knox-Johnston sailed into Ralmouth after a 312-day non-stop voyage, 1969. Today is the Feast Day of St Agrippa I, pope, Saints Epiphodius and Alexander, St Leonides of Alexandria, St Opportuna and St Theodore of Sykeon.

Lectures

National Gallery: Franca Trinchieri Camiz, "Caravaggio and Music". 1pm.

ROYAL ENGAGEMENTS

The Queen and The Duke of Edinburgh attend a Reception and Dinner at Syon House, Brentford, Middlesex, given by HM Lord-Lieutenants to mark the Queen's 70th birthday and the Duke of Edinburgh's 75th birthday. The Duke of Edinburgh visits Cheam Hawtrey School, Newbury, Berkshire. The Duke of Gloucester, Patron, Japan Society, attends the Annual Dinner at the Grosvenor House Hotel, London W1.

Changing of the Guard

The Household Cavalry Mounted Regiment mounts the Queen's Life Guard at Horse Guards, 11am; 1st Battalion Welsh Guards mounts the Queen's Guard at Buckingham Palace, 11.30am, band provided by the Scots Guards.

April 2015

Dilly-dallying Footsie gets off the fence and chases Wall Street

After limping along for more than two months blue chips have suddenly displayed the type of enthusiasm that sent New York rocketing in new highs.

The gap which opened between the FT-SE 100 index and the Dow Jones Average mystified many stock market players. For a time the Dow seemed capable of producing record-breaking performances with infinite ease while Footsie, until last week, dilly-dallied.

But perhaps too much attention is paid to Footsie; after all, the supporting index, which covers the 250 shares that come after the 100 blue chips, has been hitting new peaks with monotonous regularity.

It could be argued that supporting shares are less worried by political uncertainty and experienced the so-called feel-good factor before their more illustrious colleagues. Are they, then, with their broad spread of interests, a far better reflection of the stock market

than blue chips? Even if they are there is no likelihood of Footsie, with its huge capitalisation, being replaced by the second-liners index.

Observers will continue to use it to plot the market although there must be a strong case for more attention being paid to the little used FT-SE 350 index, embracing the two main indices. It stretched to new highs before Footsie's belated response last week.

A week, as Harold Wilson so famously pointed out, is a long time in politics - it is also a long time in many other areas, including the market.

A week ago, although the bulls were gathering, there seemed little to suggest blue chips were picking up and suddenly striding in new highs. Although the political outlook remained hazy, encouraging economic data and a rush of takeover speculation drove shares forward.

The astonishing descent on

National Power, which had not been seen as a takeover play, was the big influence; the shares of Britain's largest generator jumped by 100p in 792p over the week with one investor prepared to pay 620p.

The arrival of Southern CN, the US predator, underlined the feeling that a rush of corporate action was due before the market got around to worrying about the election and what the Labour Party's real attitude would be towards the City and the bid industry.

The Conservatives' dismal showing in the Staffordshire South by-election must, the market reasoned, sharpen the desire of any predator to get a deal done and dusted before any chance of New, or even old, Labour interference.

The past week has strengthened the bulls' claim that Footsie at 4,000 points is not far away. A few takeover bids - Ladbrokes, Lucas Industries, London Electric and Thorn



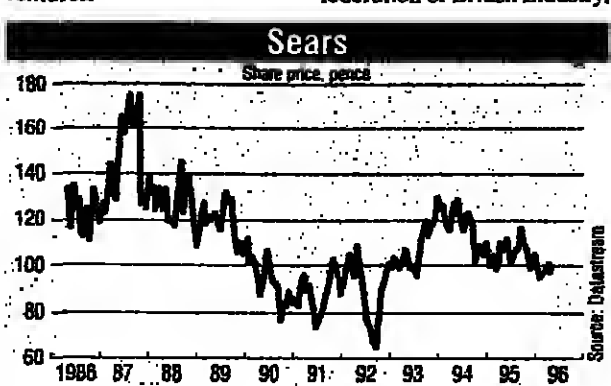
STOCK MARKET WEEK

DEREK PAIN

Stock market reporter of the year

EMI? - would provide further inspiration; so would firm developments in the NP/Southern and BT/Cable & Wireless adventures.

Retail sales for March will be assiduously studied. It is hoped they will confirm the upward trend signalled by the Confederation of British Industry,



which gave retail shares such an uplift last week. NatWest Securities is looking for a repeat of February's 0.6 per cent increase. The CBI's industrial trends survey and the response to the Government's £3bn gilts auction will also be important indicators this week.

With the emphasis on running for the second week now it is appropriate that Sears, the conglomerate created by the legendary Sir Charles Clore and taken apart by his successors, should feature in the results parade.

Sears is nine share missing the market party. Before the 1987 crash it touched 175p. It is now below 100p and last week an institution was prepared to dump shares at 94p.

Pressure is mounting on Ulsterman Liam Strong, the chief executive drafted in from British Airways, to deliver the goods. He has undertaken a stream of disposals which can only distort the year's figures.

due tomorrow. Normalised profit could be around £103m, down from £139.6m but the headline pre-tax return could be nearer £65m.

Austin Reed is another retailer on the rack. Profits are expected to have nearly halved to just above £3m, a development that will not strengthen the clothing chain's defence should one of the rumoured predators - Burton and Moss Bros are the favourites - decide the time is ripe to strike.

Bentalls, the Kingston-upon-Thames department store, and the Etam fashion chain are other retailers likely to record profit falls but Essex Furniture, DFS Furniture and JJB Sports are expected to have made headway.

Eurotunnel, with year's results today, will no doubt have another disastrous tale to tell. A loss of £700m and more pressure on its bankers is expected. But Associated British Foods, announcing interim fig-

ures today, is expected to produce a further example of its steady growth, with £181m against £165m. The group is cash-rich and could be tempted into a share buy-back or even a special dividend.

The view is it will not raid its cash hoard to mount a big bid, but remain content with modest, bolt-on acquisitions.

Bank of Scotland, due to report on Wednesday, is another on the market's ever-lengthening hit list. But the shares have fallen from grace as any takeover has failed to materialise and the group, despite an expected 22 per cent profit increase to £550m, has found trading tough.

The week's results are rounded off by Joseph Holt, a family-run Manchester brewer. A cost-conscious company with some of the cheapest beer prices in the country, Holt's shares are standing at an expectedly rich £34.25p each, giving a £105m capitalisation.

Alcoholic Beverages

Stock	Price	Chg	Vol	Ind
Adnoca	12.50	+	100	100
Adnoca	12.50	+	100	100
Adnoca	12.50	+	100	100
Adnoca	12.50	+	100	100
Adnoca	12.50	+	100	100

Banks, Merchant

Stock	Price	Chg	Vol	Ind
Barclays	12.50	+	100	100
Barclays	12.50	+	100	100
Barclays	12.50	+	100	100
Barclays	12.50	+	100	100
Barclays	12.50	+	100	100

Banks, Retail

Stock	Price	Chg	Vol	Ind
Barclays	12.50	+	100	100
Barclays	12.50	+	100	100
Barclays	12.50	+	100	100
Barclays	12.50	+	100	100
Barclays	12.50	+	100	100

Breweries, Pubs & Rest

Stock	Price	Chg	Vol	Ind
Adnoca	12.50	+	100	100
Adnoca	12.50	+	100	100
Adnoca	12.50	+	100	100
Adnoca	12.50	+	100	100
Adnoca	12.50	+	100	100

Building/Construction

Stock	Price	Chg	Vol	Ind
Adnoca	12.50	+	100	100
Adnoca	12.50	+	100	100
Adnoca	12.50	+	100	100
Adnoca	12.50	+	100	100
Adnoca	12.50	+	100	100

Chemicals

Stock	Price	Chg	Vol	Ind
Adnoca	12.50	+	100	100
Adnoca	12.50	+	100	100
Adnoca	12.50	+	100	100
Adnoca	12.50	+	100	100
Adnoca	12.50	+	100	100

Electronics

Stock	Price	Chg	Vol	Ind
Adnoca	12.50	+	100	100
Adnoca	12.50	+	100	100
Adnoca	12.50	+	100	100
Adnoca	12.50	+	100	100
Adnoca	12.50	+	100	100

Engineering

Stock	Price	Chg	Vol	Ind
Adnoca	12.50	+	100	100
Adnoca	12.50	+	100	100
Adnoca	12.50	+	100	100
Adnoca	12.50	+	100	100
Adnoca	12.50	+	100	100

Food Manufacturers

Stock	Price	Chg	Vol	Ind
Adnoca	12.50	+	100	100
Adnoca	12.50	+	100	100
Adnoca	12.50	+	100	100
Adnoca	12.50	+	100	100
Adnoca	12.50	+	100	100

Gas Distribution

Stock	Price	Chg	Vol	Ind
Adnoca	12.50	+	100	100
Adnoca	12.50	+	100	100
Adnoca	12.50	+	100	100
Adnoca	12.50	+	100	100
Adnoca	12.50	+	100	100

Health Care

Stock	Price	Chg	Vol	Ind
Adnoca	12.50	+	100	100
Adnoca	12.50	+	100	100
Adnoca	12.50	+	100	100
Adnoca	12.50	+	100	100
Adnoca	12.50	+	100	100

Household Goods

Stock	Price	Chg	Vol	Ind
Adnoca	12.50	+	100	100
Adnoca	12.50	+	100	100
Adnoca	12.50	+	100	100
Adnoca	12.50	+	100	100
Adnoca	12.50	+	100	100

Investment Companies

Stock	Price	Chg	Vol	Ind
Adnoca	12.50	+	100	100
Adnoca	12.50	+	100	100
Adnoca	12.50	+	100	100
Adnoca	12.50	+	100	100
Adnoca	12.50	+	100	100

Leisure & Hotels

Stock	Price	Chg	Vol	Ind
Adnoca	12.50	+	100	100
Adnoca	12.50	+	100	100
Adnoca	12.50	+	100	100
Adnoca	12.50	+	100	100
Adnoca	12.50	+	100	100

Life Assurance

Stock	Price	Chg	Vol	Ind
Adnoca	12.50	+	100	100
Adnoca	12.50	+	100	100
Adnoca	12.50	+	100	100
Adnoca	12.50	+	100	100
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Media

Stock	Price	Chg	Vol	Ind
Adnoca	12.50	+	100	100
Adnoca	12.50	+	100	100
Adnoca	12.50	+	100	100
Adnoca	12.50	+	100	100
Adnoca	12.50	+	100	100

Oil Exploration

Stock	Price	Chg	Vol	Ind
Adnoca	12.50	+	100	100
Adnoca	12.50	+	100	100
Adnoca	12.50	+	100	100
Adnoca	12.50	+	100	100
Adnoca	12.50	+	100	100

Oil, Integrated

Stock	Price	Chg	Vol	Ind
Adnoca	12.50	+	100	100
Adnoca	12.50	+	100	100
Adnoca	12.50	+	100	100
Adnoca	12.50	+	100	100
Adnoca	12.50	+	100	100

Other Financial

Stock	Price	Chg	Vol	Ind
Adnoca	12.50	+	100	100
Adnoca	12.50	+	100	100
Adnoca	12.50	+	100	100
Adnoca	12.50	+	100	100
Adnoca	12.50	+	100	100

Pharmaceuticals

Stock	Price	Chg	Vol	Ind
Adnoca	12.50	+	100	100
Adnoca	12.50	+	100	100
Adnoca	12.50	+	100	100
Adnoca	12.50	+	100	100
Adnoca	12.50	+	100	100

Printing & Paper

Stock	Price	Chg	Vol	Ind
Adnoca	12.50	+	100	100
Adnoca	12.50	+	100	100
Adnoca	12.50	+	100	100
Adnoca	12.50	+	100	100
Adnoca	12.50	+	100	100

Property

Stock	Price	Chg	Vol	Ind
Adnoca	12.50	+	100	100
Adnoca	12.50	+	100	100
Adnoca	12.50	+	100	100
Adnoca	12.50	+	100	100
Adnoca	12.50	+	100	100

Support Services

Stock	Price	Chg	Vol	Ind
Adnoca	12.50	+	100	100
Adnoca	12.50	+	100	100
Adnoca	12.50	+	100	100
Adnoca	12.50	+	100	100
Adnoca	12.50	+	100	100

Transport

Stock	Price	Chg	Vol	Ind
Adnoca	12.50	+	100	100
Adnoca	12.50	+	100	100
Adnoca	12.50	+	100	100
Adnoca	12.50	+	100	100
Adnoca	12.50	+	100	100

Water

Stock	Price	Chg	Vol	Ind
Adnoca	12.50	+	100	100
Adnoca	12.50	+	100	100
Adnoca	12.50	+	100	100
Adnoca	12.50	+	100	100
Adnoca	12.50	+	100	100

Index-linked

Stock	Price	Chg	Vol	Ind
Adnoca	12.50	+	100	100
Adnoca	12.50	+	100	100
Adnoca	12.50	+	100	100
Adnoca	12.50	+	100	100
Adnoca	12.50	+	100	100

Shorts

Stock	Price	Chg	Vol	Ind
Adnoca	12.50	+	100	100
Adnoca	12.50	+	100	100
Adnoca	12.50	+	100	100
Adnoca	12.50	+	100	100
Adnoca	12.50	+	100	100

Unlisted

Stock	Price	Chg	Vol	Ind
Adnoca	12.50	+	100	100
Adnoca	12.50	+	100	100
Adnoca	12.50	+	100	100
Adnoca	12.50	+	100	100
Adnoca	12.50	+	100	100

Government Securities

Stock	Price	Chg
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National Power set to raise Southern bid

MICHAEL HARRISON

National Power is today expected to renew its bid for Southern Electric with an offer of around £9.90 a share, valuing the company at just under £3.6bn.

The renewed bid is designed to fend off a threatened £3bn takeover of National Power by Southern Company, the giant American utility.

National Power's offer will be conditional on the deal being waved through by Trade and Industry Secretary Ian Lang.

In an attempt to rush the offer through, National Power may dispense with the conventional 60-day bid timetable in favour of a 21-day bid.

Southern Company of Atlanta, Georgia, was meanwhile reviewing its options yesterday as it became clear that National Power was intent on pursuing an independent strategy

and rebuffing the American merger approach. Some observers believe the US utility might abandon its planned takeover and switch its attentions elsewhere in the UK or Europe.

One source said: "If National Power is intent on pursuing an expensive short-term defence of itself, Southern will opt for another target, perhaps in another part of the world."

"There is a distinct possibility that Southern will not bid and it is getting more probable with every move National Power makes."

The Government is expected to announce later this week whether it will allow the National Power-Southern Electric merger to proceed.

The takeover has already been approved with only minimal conditions by the Monopolies and Mergers Commission. Ministers may, however, decide

to impose tougher conditions on the merger to protect competition and prevent National Power abusing its dominant position in the electricity pool, the wholesale market for England and Wales.

National Power's initial bid last October was worth £10.10 a share and valued Southern Electric at £2.8bn but since then it has demergered its stake in the National Grid. Its fresh bid of around £9.90 compares

with last Friday's closing price of £8.59.

National Power is likely to justify the healthy premium on the grounds that its price will include the final dividend Southern Electric is paying. Since last October Southern Electric has also benefited from the £600m sale of First Hydro to Mission Energy of the US.

National Power's manoeuvres since Southern Company made its merger approach last

Tuesday are said to have been viewed as "extremely depressing" in the American camp.

In addition to its renewed bid, National Power announced the £1.7bn sale last Friday of 4,000 megawatts of power station capacity to the Hanson-owned Eastern Electricity.

Some sources suggest this has made the prospect of Southern Company going ahead with a hostile bid remote. Others believe that the Americans are simply trying to dampen expectations and hence lower the price at which they will bid.

Tom Boren, chief executive of Southern Electric International, Southern Company's overseas division, left Britain last Friday for Europe and was flying on to America.

If Southern did pull out, it could turn its attention to a deal with PowerGen, or build its own power stations in Britain.

Tax juggling gave Glaxo £132m boost

MAGNUS GRIMOND

Glaxo Wellcome yesterday rejected any suggestion that it had not provided fully for huge potential tax liabilities following revelations that up to half the drugs group's recent earnings growth may have come from international tax juggling.

Accounts filed recently by Glaxo's manufacturing operation in Singapore show that tax provisions released over the past two and a half years to December have boosted group profits by £132m.

In the two years to June 1995, which cover most of this period, Glaxo's after-tax profits - excluding last year's Wellcome acquisition - grew by £255m. This suggests that approaching half the growth in group profits may have been derived from the clever use of tax allowances rather than from the underlying business.

Glaxo yesterday refused to comment on the effect of tax on its recent earnings, although sources confirmed the accuracy of the figures. However, a spokesman for the group reiterated that all past tax liabilities had been fully provided for.

The Singapore operation was set up 10 years ago and the benefit derived from it in the terms of taxation and profitability has been adequately disclosed and widely known. It has been disclosed in annual reports for many years.

Glaxo's flagging underlying growth revealed by the figures helps explain why the group was so anxious to send last year's £9.3bn takeover of rival drugs group Wellcome.

The addition of Wellcome is expected to boost future earnings but it now also transpires that, separately, the Singapore businesses were a key element in financing the deal.

Documents show that £23m, equivalent to a third of the cash element of the total consideration for Wellcome, was transferred to the UK from Singapore three months after the takeover.

It is also thought the Singapore operation helped refinance disastrous treasury operations in Bermuda, where losses on an ill-judged bond portfolio eventually reached £115m.

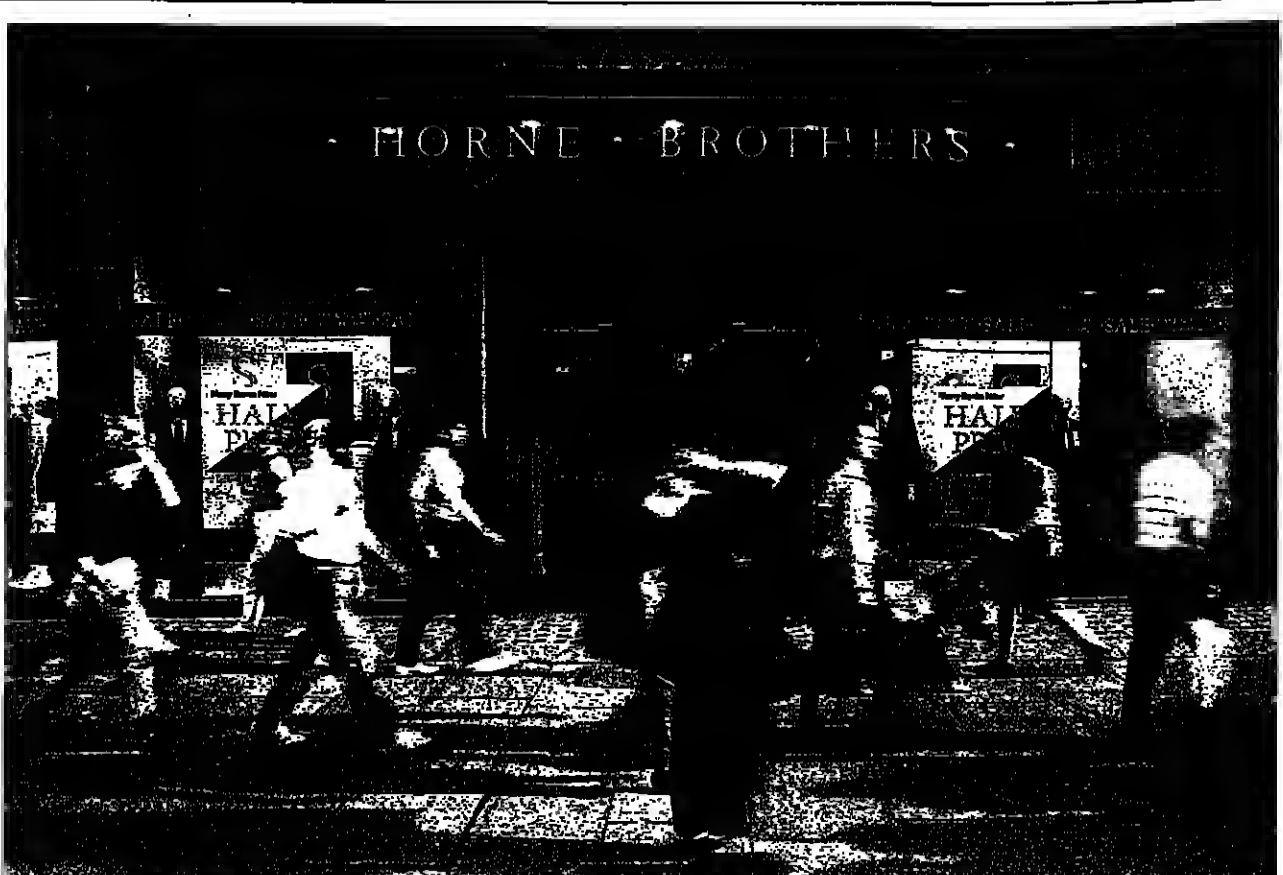
The huge gains available to the group in minimising tax also shed light on the drug giant's long-running battle to prevent the Inland Revenue re-opening old tax accounts filed before 1986 to investigate the legitimacy of so-called "transfer pricing" arrangements between international subsidiaries.

Glaxo last year lost a High Court case against the Inland Revenue involving transfer pricing and its appeal to the Court of Appeal was thrown out at the end of 1995. It is now involved in discussions with the tax authorities to see if the matter can be settled out of court, but no early resolution is expected.

The dispute involves early tax years in the 1980s when Glaxo was growing rapidly on the back of Zantac, its best-selling anti-ulcer drug, and is thought to involve the Singapore business. The operation, which makes Zantac, is taxed at a lower rate than typical elsewhere in the world. Last year the original Glaxo group had a tax rate of 29.5 per cent against 37 per cent at the new Wellcome operations.

Notes in Glaxo's accounts have for some years drawn attention to the continuing dispute with the tax authorities.

But the revelation that money was transferred from Singapore sits oddly with a statement by Glaxo last year that no provision beyond that made in the accounts had been made for "taxation which would arise on the distribution of profits retained by overseas subsidiary and associated undertakings on the grounds the profits are retained for use in the business".



Confidence regained: Credit card use at high street retailers was particularly strong over the last year

Surge in lending and spending

DIANE COYLE
Economics Editor

Fresh signs that consumer confidence is picking up are expected this week from figures on March mortgage lending due today and retail sales on Thursday.

Following last week's run of good news, which gave the Government hope that the economic tide will turn in its favour in good time for the general election, further buoyancy could help shares in London set fresh records.

"Perky figures this week will help keep the FTSE going up," said Bob Semple, UK equity strategist at NatWest Markets.

Building societies and big banks are expected today to report an increase in mortgage loans following other signs of life in the housing market. House prices have started to climb, and estate agents have reported a noticeable increase in numbers of customers.

New figures released this morning show a further surge in spending on debit and credit cards last month. Spending on plastic grew 23.4 per cent in the year to March, when it topped £6bn for the first month.

Debit card spending expanded by a third during the year to March. Credit card spending grew 16.8 per cent, the highest since last July, according to the Credit Card Research Group.

Elizabeth Phillips, director of the group, said: "Although the increase was probably inflated by pre-Easter shopping, it seems clear that consumers are regaining their confidence."

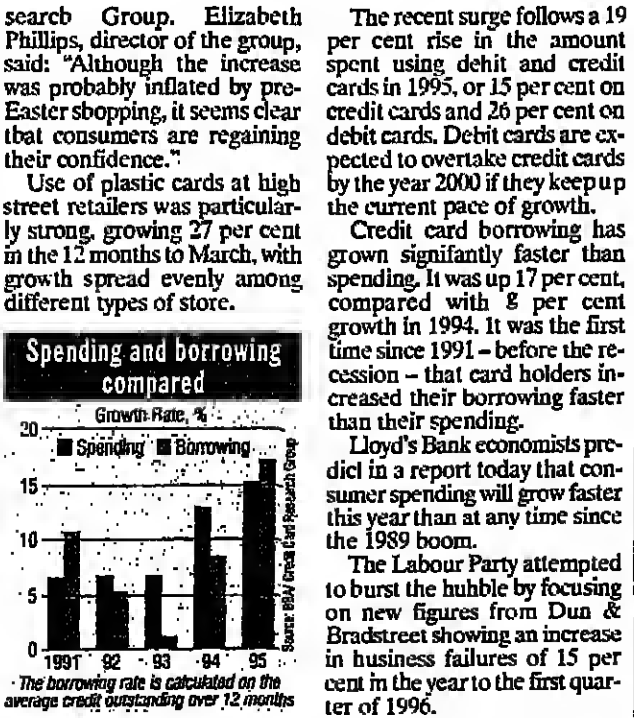
Use of plastic cards at high street retailers was particularly strong, growing 27 per cent in the 12 months to March, with growth spread evenly among different types of store.

The recent surge follows a 19 per cent rise in the amount spent using debit and credit cards in 1995, or 15 per cent on credit cards and 26 per cent on debit cards. Debit cards are expected to overtake credit cards by the year 2000 if they keep up the current pace of growth.

Credit card borrowing has grown significantly faster than spending. It was up 17 per cent, compared with 8 per cent growth in 1994. It was the first time since 1991 - before the recession - that card holders increased their borrowing faster than their spending.

Lloyd's Bank economists predict in a report today that consumer spending will grow faster this year than at any time since the 1989 boom.

The Labour Party attempted to burst the bubble by focusing on new figures from Dun & Bradstreet showing an increase in business failures of 15 per cent in the year to the first quarter of 1996.



BT likes the sound of Chinese telephone numbers

Peking's *China Daily* newspaper has just published a slew of figures which give some idea why BT is so keen to merge with Cable & Wireless to secure a foothold in the Chinese telecommunications market. It should be noted that Chinese numbers always tend to dazzle, even if they sometimes look better on paper than in reality.

So, with this caveat, here is a sample of what China's posts and telecommunications ministry has in mind for the next few years: 79 million new telephone lines are to be installed by 2000.

China plans to have the world's largest telephone network by the end of the decade with 420 million lines. Even then the network will cover only 10.5 per cent of the country.

Meanwhile the Chinese are enthusiastically plugging into mobile communications, with 2.06 million subscribers signing up last year, bringing the total of users up to 3.64 million and a target of 14-18 million users by 2000.

The growth in pager ownership is even more fantastic. There were a mere 430,000 pager users in 1990. Last year 25 million were at the beck and call of these tiny bleeping machines with 50 million expected to be signed up by the end of the decade.

BT is running corporate image-building advertisements in East Asian newspapers at the moment. This is no coincidence.

It had to happen. Not only has Hong Kong's office price bubble burst but developers are holding back on acquiring new office sites and are showing reluctance in developing those they already have in hand. According to property consultants Vigers the capital value of offices in the prime central district has fallen from a high of HK\$15,500 (£1,536) per square foot in the second quarter of 1994 to HK\$8,400 at the end of last year.

Meanwhile, office rentals, still in the outer stratosphere, dropped by over a quarter last year to a monthly rental of around HK\$66 per square foot.

These price falls push Hong Kong off its uncomfortable perch of having the world's highest prices for office space. The dreaded word "glut" is

VIEW FROM HONG KONG

making it increasingly less competitive.

Stockbrokers' analysts - who are always most happy when moving as a herd - seem to have decided that Hong Kong's newspaper price war is over after an exchange of hostilities lasting about six months, which has left a trail of casualties, including half-a-dozen publications that gave up the fight and folded.

Listed newspapers were given a hammering at the end of last year after the price war was launched by the Oriental Press Group, striving Murdoch-style to retain its market leadership.

Its flagship *Oriental Daily Newpaper* was under threat from the rash new *Apple Daily*, which zoomed from nowhere to the number two position in the readership stakes after its launch last summer.

As Oriental Press Group cut the prices of its publications to below the costs of production, investors took fright. However, cover prices are inching up again and good news about falling newspaper costs have led the analysts' herd to conclude that media stocks are a buy. OPG is now among the year's best share performers.

The herd seems to have overlooked the simple fact that the reason for the price war has not gone away as *Apple* and its sister publications continue to make headway.

Meanwhile a new paper, called *Mad Dog Daily*, was launched as the price war started to peter out. The title says a lot about the state of the newspaper market in Hong Kong these days.

STOCK MARKETS

FTSE 100

Index	Close	Week's chg	Change (%)	1995/96 High	1995/96 Low	Yield (%)
FTSE 100	3957.10	+90.3	+2.4	3957.10	3639.50	3.85
FTSE 250	4534.50	+126.5	+2.9	4534.50	4015.30	3.28
FTSE 350	1946.40	+47.5	+2.5	1946.40	1816.60	3.72
FT Small Cap	2187.97	+64.0	+3.0	2187.97	1954.06	2.96
FT All Share	1924.17	+47.7	+2.5	1924.17	1791.95	3.67
New York	9535.48	+2.9	+0.1	9535.48	9332.09	2.17
Tokyo	21893.84	+233.4	+1.1	21893.84	19734.70	0.72
Hong Kong	10818.49	-31.3	-0.3	11584.99	10073.39	3.31
Frankfurt	2536.92	+24.7	+1.0	2536.92	2293.86	1.84

Source: FT Information

INTEREST RATES

UK interest rates

Bank of England yield curve 0-25 year gilt (%)**

*All rates are market convention

US interest rates

Reserve Bank yield curve 0-30 year bonds**

Source: Merrill Lynch

Money Market Rates

Instrument	1 Month	1 Year
UK	5.94	6.38
US	5.38	5.75
Japan	0.50	0.91
Germany	3.28	4.12

**Reserve Bank indices

Bond Yields *

Instrument	1 Year	Long Bond	30 Year Avg
UK	8.02	8.35	8.11
US	6.55	7.01	6.80
Japan	3.30	3.42	3.42
Germany	6.38	7.08	7.11

MAIN PRICE CHANGES

Rises - Top 5

Price (q)	W's % Chg (q)	% Change
Ashley (Lauria) 196	39	24.8
National Power	892	100
British Biotech	2805	440

Falls - Top 5

Price (q)	W's % Chg (q)	% Change
MI Laboratories	404	19
Yorkshire Elec Grp	861	37
Lonrho	199	8.5

CURRENCIES

\$/£

Instrument	1 Month	3 Months	6 Months	1 Year
\$/£	1.5177	+0.046	1.5645	0.6589
\$/¥	1.5170	+0.256	1.5685	0.6592
DM/£	2.2851	+1.290	2.425	1.5057
¥/£	162.336	-11.905	156.09	¥/£
£ Index	83.9	+0.3	88.5	£ Index

\$/DM

Dollar vs.

	Close	Week's Chg	1 Y Ago
£ (London)	1.5177	+0.046	1.5645
¥ (New York)	1.5170	+0.256	1.5685
DM (London)	2.2851	+1.290	2.425
¥ (London)	162.336	-11.905	156.09
£ Index	83.9	+0.3	88.5

	Close	Week's Chg	1 Y Ago
£ (New York)	0.6589	-0.28	0.639
¥ (New York)	0.6592	-0.11	0.638
DM (London)	1.5057	+0.200	1.55
¥ (London)	106.965	-11.710	99.77
£ Index	96.4	-0.4	96.1

OTHER INDICATORS

	Close	Week's Chg	1 Y Ago		Index	Latest	1 Y Ago	Next Figs
DII Brent \$	18.59	-2.96	18.63	RPI	151.5	+2.2	147.5	16 May
Gold \$	390.60	-3.55	390.50	GDP	107.0	+2.0	106.1	29 Apr
Gold £	257.36	-3.41	243.11	Base Rates	6.00pc	6.75	-	

RAILTRACK
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If you would like to register for the offer through Pershing Securities Share Shop: Either telephone (lines open Mon-Fri: 9am to 6pm) the number above or complete the attached coupon, following the instructions below.

INSTRUCTIONS:

- Using BLOCK CAPITALS, fully complete the coupon below.
- Fill in the coupon and send it to:
Railtrack Share Shop, Pershing Securities Limited, FREEPOST (EDO 5763), London E14 9BR
- Registration is only open to individuals, only one registration per person.
- To register any person under 18 (under 20 in Jersey) write the full name of the parent, grandparent or guardian, followed by the full initials of the child in the space provided.
- Confirmation of your registration will be sent to you. This may include literature relating to the Share Shop's other services.

Please note that registering for the Railtrack share offer does not result in any obligation to apply for shares.

Individuals who register with, and apply through, a Share Shop in the UK Public Offer will receive greater preference in allocation, on a basis to be determined, than members of demand for shares.

The registration form is issued by, and is the responsibility solely of, PERSHING SECURITIES LIMITED, which is acting as a Share Shop in relation to the Railtrack Share Offer. A Share Shop making an application for shares on your behalf in the Offer will be acting as your agent and has no authority to act for the Secretary of State or the Offer. The information contained in the Prospectus will be issued in connection with the Offer. This information is approved by PERSHING SECURITIES LIMITED a member of The London Stock Exchange, LIFFE and Regulated by The Securities and Futures Authority.

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Surname _____

Child's Initials _____

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SCIENCE

Encounter with a distant stranger

Before Pluto retreats from Earth on its 240-year circuit of the Sun, scientists are desperate to uncover its secrets. **Peter Bond reports**

Which is the farthest planet from the Sun? Although the answer given by all the textbooks is Pluto, this is not entirely true. For 20 years, during each 240-year circuit around the Sun, Pluto slips inside the orbit of Neptune and becomes the eighth planet from the Sun. This rare episode will come to an end in 1999, when Pluto will regain its status as the planetary outpost of the Solar System.

Such orbital idiosyncrasy is of great significance for scientists hoping to learn more about this peculiar world. At present, Pluto is relatively close, about 4.5bn kilometres from the Sun. However, its orbit is highly elliptical so that by the year 2113 it will have drifted out to almost 7.5bn kilometres – an increase of two-thirds in distance.

As if this remoteness was not enough, astronomers also have to contend with Pluto's tiny size. Just 2,300km across, Pluto is much smaller than our Moon. Not surprisingly, astronomers have struggled to piece together a coherent picture of

this enigmatic object since its discovery in 1930. Another 48 years went by before the discovery of its moon, Charon.

Before the planet retreats into the depths of space and once more becomes a bleak, frozen ice ball, Nasa, the US space agency, is desperately attempting to put together a spacecraft reconnaissance mission. The current plan, dubbed Pluto Express, is to send two small spacecraft to the Pluto-Charon system. As both objects rotate once every 6.4 days, the second craft, targeted to arrive 3.2 days after the first, would be able to survey regions hidden in darkness during the initial approach.

In the Eighties, when Charon and Pluto began a series of mutual eclipses, astronomers were able to piece together the first maps of surface brightness. Evidence emerged of brighter polar regions, possibly covered in frost. Then, in 1988, came the revelation that Pluto had a thin atmosphere, probably composed of nitrogen or methane.

The latest breakthrough has

been provided by the Hubble Space Telescope. From its advantageous viewpoint above Earth's turbulent atmosphere, pictures taken with European Space Agency's Faint Object Camera have observed details on the surface for the first time.

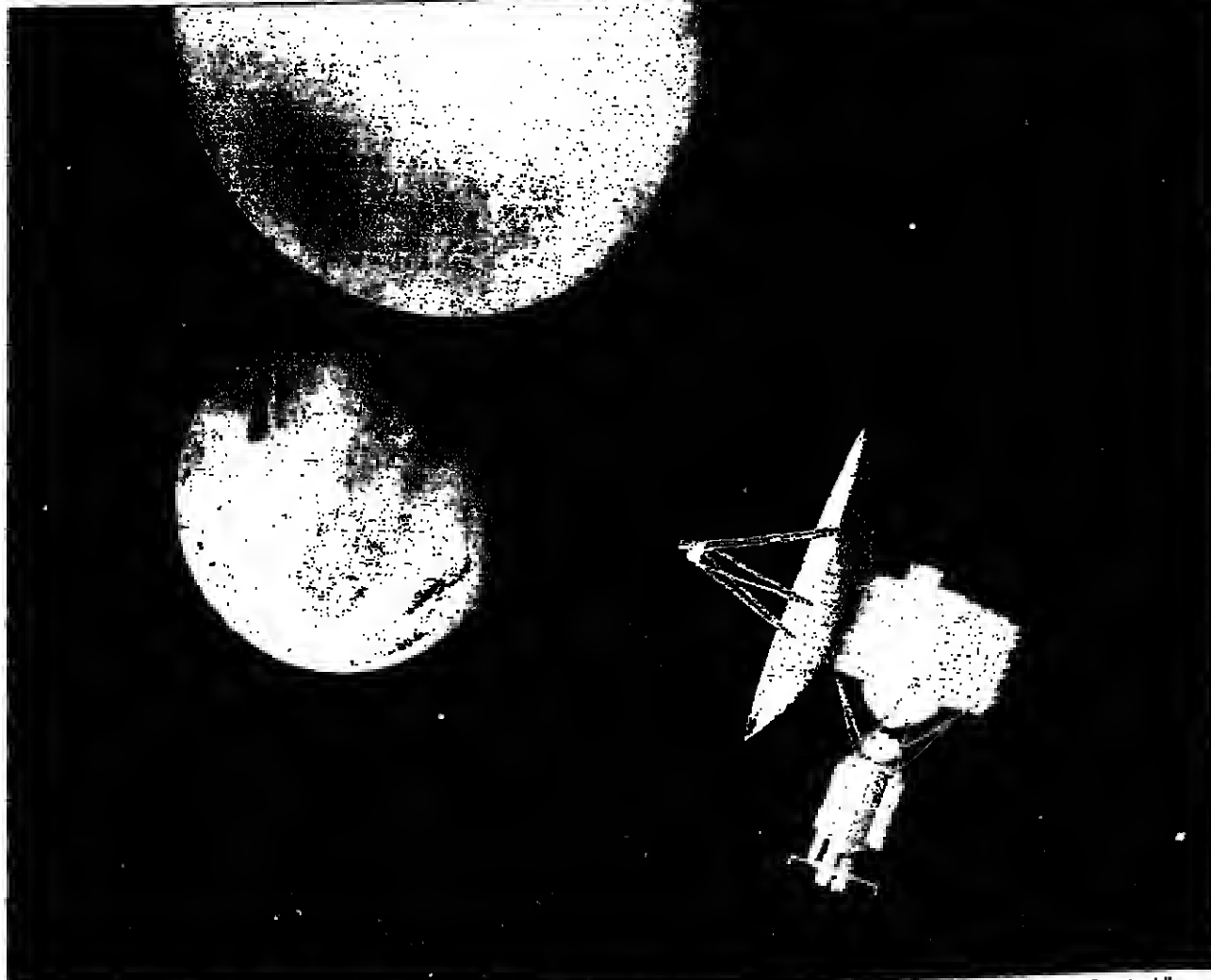
After computer processing, Hubble's snapshots, taken during one complete Plutonian rotation, reveal major variations in brightness across the entire planet. "I don't know anything in the outer Solar System that looks like this," says team member Dr Alan Stern, of Southwest Research Institute in Boulder, Colorado. Apart from the previously known bright polar regions, the images show a "ragged" north polar cap bisected by a dark strip, a bright spot seen rotating with the planet, a cluster of dark spots and a bright linear marking.

Speculation is rife over what these markings might represent. Some may be topographic features such as basins and fresh craters. The most favoured explanation is dra-

matic seasonal changes resulting from Pluto's orbit. During the 200-year-long winter, gases freeze and settle on to the icy wastes. When the short warm season returns, these frosts probably turn back into a gas. As a result, some regions are bright like new snow while others resemble dirty snow. The brighter deposits are probably nitrogen frost deposited during the past few decades, while the grey areas may be coated in residues of hydrocarbons where ultraviolet sunlight and cosmic rays have chemically altered the methane frost.

At present, Pluto is enjoying its short summer break. As the dirty ices are evaporated, the thin atmosphere swells and evolves. All too soon the winter will return and the gases will freeze out once more, forming a fresh, frosty coating.

Despite public support from the Nasa director, Dan Goldin, Pluto Express scientists at the Jet Propulsion Laboratory in Pasadena, California, are faced by the financial constraints on all space activities.



Pluto Express: Nasa wants to send two spacecraft to Pluto (top) and its moon, Charon

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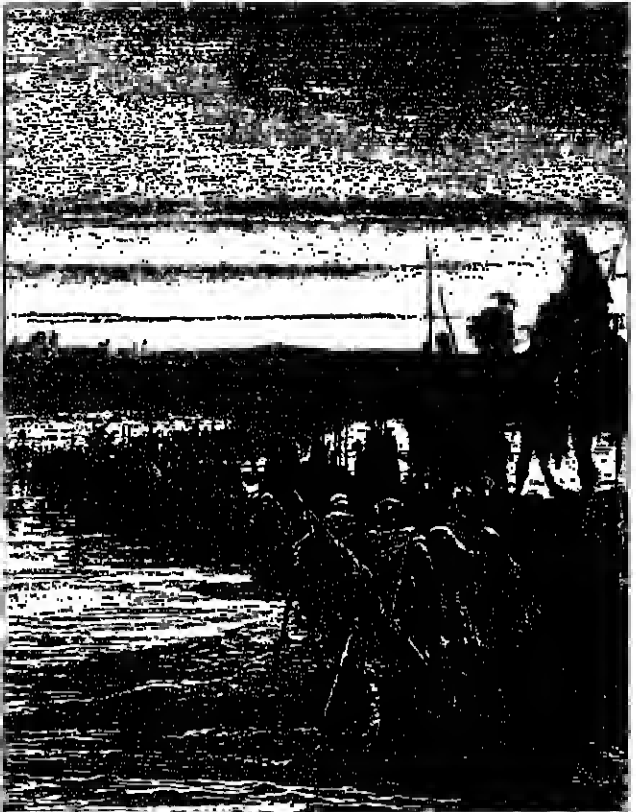
The challenge is to present a plan that could be given the go-ahead by Congress in 1998 or 1999, allowing the launches to proceed in 2001, with Pluto flybys in 2012-2013. Current estimates put the cost of such a mission at around \$300m.

In order to achieve this, plan-

ners are hoping to use lower-cost Russian rockets to boost the craft on their way. The spacecraft themselves will weigh no more than 100kg (220lb) yet have sufficient computer power to probe the planet in the visible, infrared, ultraviolet and radio regions of the electromagnetic spectrum.

According to the Pluto Express preproject manager, Robert Staehle, both Pluto and Charon could be mapped with a global resolution of around 1km, with spot coverage revealing features as small as 100 metres across.

Does America still have the vision and purpose to grasp this rare opportunity? If Pluto Express remains grounded, several lifetimes will pass before a similar mission can be launched. The last time Pluto was this close to the Sun, King George II was on the throne and Britain still ruled the American colonies.



The Israelites: what was 'manna from Heaven'? Hulton Getty

The beetle cocoon that was manna for Moses

Molecule of the month: John Emsley looks at trehalose

Passover, the religious festival celebrated by Jews this month, commemorates the night when the Angel of Death spared the Israelites but killed the first-born of their Egyptian masters. The disaster persuaded the Egyptians to release their slaves, and so began their 40 years in the wilderness. Within a few weeks the Israelites were starving, so Moses appealed to God, who promised: "I will rain down bread from Heaven for you." [Exodus 16] and delivered the mysterious, but nutritious, manna which was "white like coriander seed and tasted like a wafer made with honey".

This Heaven-sent sweetness might again be saving lives – thanks to a British company, Manna was almost certainly trehalose, a white crystalline carbohydrate made of two glucose molecules joined together. It is one of very few naturally occurring molecules that taste sweet, although it is only half as

sweet as sugar. What the Israelites were gathering was the cocoon of the parasitic beetle *Trehala manna* from which trehalose gets its name, and which explains Moses' warning not to hoard it: "Some, however, did not listen... and it became full of maggots and stank." The cocoons, found on thorn bushes in the Middle East, are highly nutritious, consisting of 30 per cent trehalose plus protein.

Trehalose occurs in honey, bread, beer, wine and vinegar, while Japanese shiitake mushrooms and baker's yeast contain as much as 20 per cent.

Trehalose has remarkable preserving power and is produced by creatures that lie dormant under drought conditions. Some plants can lose over 95 per cent of their water content and still survive, thanks to the trehalose in their cells.

John Crowe, of the Univer-

sity of California at Davis, suggested that trehalose has the right shape to replace water molecules around vital cell proteins and prevent them from collapsing. Michael Burke, of Oregon State University, believes that trehalose forms a supportive "glass" like that of boiled sweets within tissues.

Steve King, of the Institute of Food Research at Norwich, has shown that small amounts of protein are needed to keep trehalose glass stable at 37°C and prevent it becoming opaque and microcrystalline.

Trehalose is now being used

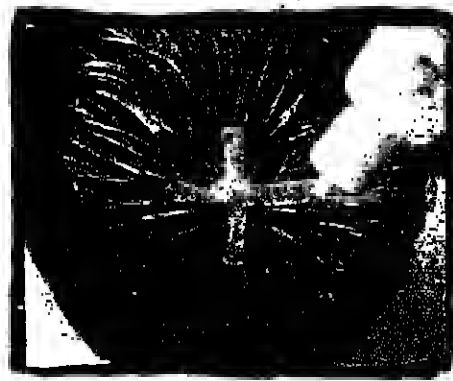
as a preservative for antibodies, vaccines, enzymes and blood coagulation factors. In 1985, Bruce Roser discovered that if trehalose was added to solutions of proteins like these, which were then dehydrated, the products could be stored at temperatures above 40°C and when rehydrated were still active. This offers an alternative way of preserving medical supplies in Third World countries, where 90 per cent of vaccines are wasted through lack of refrigeration facilities. Mr Roser has set up his own company, Quadrant, at Cambridge, to exploit his dis-

covery, and employs 30 people. "After years of storage at room temperature, trehalose-dried antibodies worked well. Even notoriously unstable enzymes, such as DNA-modifying and restriction enzymes, worked after being stored for a month at 70°C," says Mr Roser. Another use could be to store blood. "Fresh blood has a shelf life of 42 days, after which it must be disposed of. Trehalose-dried blood could mean an end to the critical blood shortages that are suffered by the health service."

Quadrant imports its trehalose from Japan. Production

is set to increase to 50 tons a month. Scientists there have shown that trehalose preserves the quality and flavour of dried foods. Many people find that powdered egg has an unpleasant taste, but if it is dehydrated with trehalose it takes on the taste of fresh egg. Other foods, such as powdered puree of bananas, mangoes, apples and avocados, also rehydrate with the taste of the fresh fruit. The method used to dry trehalose-treated foods is much cheaper than the normal methods of vacuum-drying and freeze-drying.

John Emsley is science writer in residence at Imperial College, London.



To many this concept would sound melodramatic. Not to us. Only dandruff sufferers know what a heavy cross this condition is to bear. An itchy, flaky scalp will not only cause physical distress, it can undermine your confidence, too. Our research taught us that dandruff is caused by a microbe. A medical condition demanding a reliable medical solution – First Aid.

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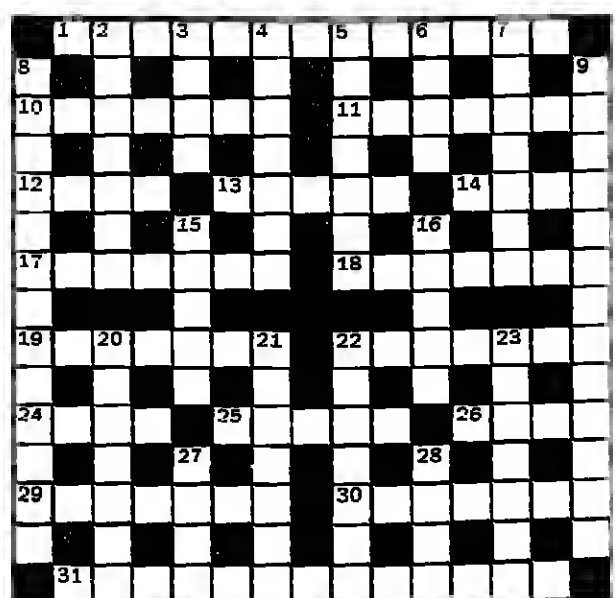
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By Porcia



- ACROSS**
- Prepared with true mango it's delicious (5-8)
 - Communication system that's all the rage? (3,4)
 - Publicity results in increase (5-2)
 - Meagre list (4)
 - Head off unpleasant type of creature (5)
 - Change track to come back North (4)
 - Control number joining exercise class (7)
 - Rough sort of player (7)
 - Certain to conceal age of celebrity (7)
 - Guy's excited about foot soldiers (7)
 - It's grasped by one on guard (4)
 - Isolated house – sounds spooky (5)
 - Short cut news (4)
 - Tear out design for old clothes (7)
 - Cap is decorated with fly-er's crest (7)

- DOWN**
- Check on sweet-scented flower and find new life (13)
 - American force is implicated in fantastic scandal (7)
 - Narrow part of path I negotiate (4)
 - Struggle with remainder of French article (7)
 - Battle to recycle square blocks (7)
 - Russian leader has trouble with transport (4)
 - Surely question refusal given at first (2,5)
 - Anyway, he's stolen biggest part (3,5,5)
 - Give callers a chance? (4,3,4,2)
 - Standard musical work (5)
 - Charge for catching river fish (5)
 - Uneasy feeling South East Asians expressed (7)
 - Chosen artist to depict Greek girl (7)
 - Decree several be taken down (7)
 - Meet Nick on time at job-centre (3,4)
 - Modern name for an inert gas (4)
 - Point to narrow bit of land (4)

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